GOLDEN COBRA

ANTHOLOGY 2015

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The Golden Cobra Challenge is a friendly contest open to anyone interested in writing and playing freeform larp. This is the second year. The contest ran from 5 to 30 October 2015.

IN ORDER TO QUALIFY, GAMES SUBMITTED IN 2015 HAD TO MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- 1. Be a new, unpublished freeform larp. It is neither a tabletop roleplaying game or a video game, although it may approach or incorporate either.
- 2. Your name can only appear on one entry but teams are welcome.
- 3. Submit your game by 30 October in .pdf format and in English to submissions@goldencobra.org. Parallel versions in other languages or other formats are encouraged.
- 4. Present your game in a playable format. If it needs handouts, they must be included.
- 5. Games playable in public will earn the warm regard of the judges but are not required.
- 6. Games with zero players must abide by the contest rules.
- 7. You retain all rights to your work but grant the judges permission to print out and play the game you submit, and for it to be included in a free anthology after the contest.

THE GOAL OF THE 2015 CONTEST WAS TO GENERATE SMALL, INTENSE, PERSONAL GAMES.
GOLDEN COBRAS WERE AWARDED IN **FIVE** CATEGORIES:

- Best use of themes/techniques for evoking empathy (Game Name, page 100)
- Best incorporation of perspectives of unheard or marginalized people or groups (Game Name, page 100)
- Best incorporation of touch (Game Name, page 100)
- Game we're most excited about (Game Name, page 100)
- Most polished and ready-to-play game (Game Name, page 100)

THE GAMES IN THIS ANTHOLOGY ARE ALL SUBMISSIONS THE DESIGNERS AGREED TO SHARE.
WE HOPE YOU PLAY AND ENJOY THEM ALL.



THE GOLDEN COBRA CHALLENGE

ANTHOLOGY 2015

The Affliction	7
Anything Helps	13
As we know it	_31
Before you leave	37
Better	_52
Beyond the Wall	63
Blessed Be the Host of the King of Heaven!	77
Celestial Bodies	91
A Crow Funeral	100
Dessert	104
Drink Me	
Dystopia	130
Exclusive Listing	156
Faerie Circle	165
Fight Truck	178
For a Long Time I Would Go to Bed Early	183
Fragments	190

Gone but not Forgotten	202
Guiding Light	214
Halloween Survival Guide	221
Her Inner Dead Ends (HIDE)	226
Here Comes a Candle	240
here. me. now	267
ICU	289
In the Dark	
It was a very good year	322
Just a Little Peril	
Just Lunch	338
The Lofty Beacons	349
The Loss	359
Lost Genius	365
Making Up is Hard to Do	370
The Other Place	377
Papier Mâché	382

Postmodern Kamikaze	387
Red Headed Stepchild	391
Serv1v3.l	394
• Sign_	399
Singing Clay	424
"Something to Drink with That, Sir?"	430
Table	432
This Folks at the Dining Room	442
Together	453
The Tongues of Our Ancestors	468
Too Much Slap On The Ecaf	485
Ugly Girl	490
Universal Donor	501
Voices	514
Waiting for Slenderman	522
Warmth	540
A way out	_546
The Woods	555
Written by the Victors	563
You Do (Not) Belong Here	_581
Zeitgeist	593
ADDENDIV	
APPFNNIX	508

DISCLAIMERS:

Thanks for reading the anthology of Golden Cobra games. While the Committee doesn't feel that it is responsible for deciding if submissions are safe, or legal, or ethically sound, we do feel strongly that designers need to exhibit fundamental care for the people who will be engaging with their work if they want that work to be taken seriously. And, as a group and individuals, we emphatically reject unsafe, illegal and unethical play ourselves.

A NOTE ON THIS YEAR'S CONTENT ON MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES:

Several games about marginalized groups submitted this year clearly had input from members of those groups. Others, however, did not. We hope all designers who explore minority experiences in their games also reach out to the communities represented in their work. More work of this variety will help us all expand our horizons.

THE AFFLICTION BY JEFFREY DIETERLE

A short game exploring the intersection of medical anxiety, illness, and interpersonal relationships.

The Affliction

A game by Jeffrey Dieterle

Summary

The Affliction is a serious freeform game for four players. It explores the intersection of hypochondria, medical anxiety, and disease, and is designed to last about an hour.

Safety

This game deals with issues of mental and physical illness, and one player will act as a direct antagonist toward another player. Before playing, participants should discuss any hard boundaries or areas of concern, and should establish, at the very minimum, safe words through which a player can signal a desire for the game to stop completely ("cut") and slow down or back away from a topic ("brake"). The players' feelings of safety should always trump any game-related concerns.

Materials

- Independent and reliable internet access for each player (e.g., smartphone, laptop, tablet)
- A timer
- Pen and paper (optional)

Roles

The Patient: One player will play the Patient throughout the entire game. The Patient will identify a persistent symptom (which may be real or imaginary), and will research, discuss, and eventually seek treatment for this ailment. In many ways, the game centers on the affective experience of the Patient, as the other players will react to the Patient's thoughts and emotions.

The Affliction: One player will play the Affliction. The Affliction represents both illness itself and the Patient's darkest feelings about the illness. While the Patient might feel hope, The Affliction is the embodiment of unrelenting fear and negativity. The Affliction is a voice inside the Patient's head. As such, it may only address the Patient directly; while the other players will be able to hear what the Affliction says to the Patient, they may not respond to the Affliction in character unless the Patient voices the thoughts and emotion presented by the Affliction.

The Other: The Other players will play multiple roles throughout the game, though they will always represent external influences.

First, they will play as Forum Posters, the aggregated denizens of health-related online resources ranging in credibility from Yahoo Answers to peer-reviewed medical publications.

After acting as Forum Posters, they will act as Loved Ones, people with whom the Patient chooses to share her fears. Loved Ones will listen to and assess the Patient's hopes and fears, and attempt to provide a positive interpretation of symptoms and act as the voice of reason or reassurance.

Finally, the players will take turns acting as Nurses and Doctors, who will ask the Patient questions about symptoms, and who have the ultimate narrative authority to determine the cause of the patient's symptoms.

Stage I: Preparation

To begin, the players should take one or two minutes to think of symptoms they, or someone they know, have been concerned about at some point. When they feel comfortable, each player should clearly describe only the symptoms (being careful not to mention a particular diagnosis or outcome) in the first person. The symptoms can be as simple or as complex as possible, and may or may not be related.

For example:

- "I feel a dull pain in my upper abdomen that gets worse when I move."
- "I have had a sore throat for weeks, and there is a bump on my neck."
- "I am tired all the time, I wake up in the middle of the night, and I'm losing weight."

Everyone should take a moment to try to imagine each symptom after they are explained. Once all symptoms have been explained, the players should remain silent, considering each potential symptom. When a player feels comfortable doing so, he should repeat one of the previously mentioned symptoms out loud. This player will be the Patient, and the symptom will serve as a starting point for the Patient's journey. From this point on, the Patient player should be very conscious of her body. Any discomfort she feels, and any questions that enter her head, should be considered seriously and incorporated into the list of symptoms.

Stage II: The Forum

Once a symptom has been chosen, everyone should take five minutes to look up as much information as possible about diseases associated with that symptom via web searches. Pay particular attention to "best case" and "worst case" diagnoses, as well as common causes. Taking notes may be helpful, but is not required.

After everyone feels comfortable with their knowledge of a few diseases that might be related to the symptoms, the game will enter the Forum stage. The Patient player will verbally create a "post" in which he summarizes his symptoms, adding to and embellishing the symptoms as she desires, and asks the "Forum Posters" for answers.

The Other players act as aggregated Forum Posters who take turns responding to the Patient's post. Their comments may or may not be accurate, reassuring, terrifying, in-depth, or even relevant. For example:

"You should probably see a doctor. It could be nothing, but it could also be quite serious."

"My aunt had something very similar. She went through years of tests, and was ultimately diagnosed with fibromyalgia."

"I have a bump that sounds just like that. Please let me know what you find out!" "It's cancer. You're dying."

After each statement, the Affliction player may respond, rebutting, agreeing with, or elaborating on the statement.

The Forum Posters continue responding until they have run out of things to say, or the patient says, "I am done with this."

Stage III: Loved Ones

Once the Forum stage is complete, the Patient will discuss his concerns with Loved Ones. Each Other player will represent a single Loved One in whom the Patient confides, one at a time. The Patient should choose who to talk to first, and should establish that Loved One's relationship to the Player early in the conversation.

The conversations should focus on the Patient's fears, and should assume a level of familiarity between the Patient and the Loved One, and the Loved Ones should care about the Patient's wellbeing. The Affliction may interject after any statement.

The following restrictions apply to the conversations:

The Patient may speak freely about her fears, her hopes, the things she has read, or anything related to her symptoms. However, the Patient **MUST** incorporate any statement introduced by the Affliction during the conversation. It may be direct or paraphrased, but it must reflect the Affliction's negativity.

The Loved Ones may only attempt to dismiss the Patient's fears, discuss positive outcomes, or discuss proactive steps the Patient might take. The Affliction may

rebut anything the Loved Ones say.

Each Patient/Loved One conversation continues until one of two things happens:

- The Loved One player feels genuinely exasperated with the conversation, and says "I can't talk about this anymore," OR
- The Patient player feels genuinely reassured, and says, "Thanks. I feel better about this now."

Regardless of the outcome, two conversations, each with the same restrictions, should take place.

Stage IV: The Doctor Visit

Finally, the Patient will consult a Doctor. One Other player should volunteer to be the Doctor; the other will serve as a Nurse.

The Patient will first see the Nurse, who will ask a handful of simple medical questions, including the reason why the Patient has come in to the office. The nurse should generally ask the patient questions that would be answered as part of a routine medical exam (e.g., "How much do you weigh?"; "What is your blood pressure?"; "Are you taking any medications?") but he may choose to substitute one question with a piece of information that the Patient might find upsetting (e.g., "Your blood pressure is pretty high."; "Your feet are a little swollen."; "You've gained some weight").

The nurse should consult briefly with the Doctor, out of earshot of the Patient, about potential diagnoses, based on the research they've each done. While the two Other players talk, the Affliction may speak freely to the Patient.

When she is ready, the Doctor will introduce herself, and ask many of the same questions that the nurse asked. The doctor has the ultimate authority on diagnostic matters, so she may ask questions or make declarations about health and the severity of disease.

The Doctor has two options at the end of the first Patient interaction:

- Refer the patient to a specialist. In this case, the Doctor and the Nurse will switch places, and repeat the Doctor Visit scene. If possible, they should ask as many of the same questions as possible. The Affliction may have a short conversation with the Patient in between the scenes.
- Order tests. In this case, the Affliction and the Patient will have a
 conversation alone, discussing everything that could be wrong. The
 Affliction is in control of this conversation, and it does not end until the
 Affliction decides to stop or five minutes pass. The Other players should set

a timer, and may choose whether or not they wish to observe, but may not participate.

After one of these two options is selected, the Doctor has a third option:

• Offer a diagnosis. The diagnosis can be as benign or as serious as the doctor wishes, though he should keep the research he did at the beginning of the game in mind.

If both of the first two options have been selected, the Doctor MUST offer a diagnosis.

Once a diagnosis is delivered, each player, starting with the Patient, should deliver a single-sentence epilogue about how the Patient fared after diagnosis. Finally, the Patient should say the following sentence, paraphrased from the ending of Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground:

"The doctor's notes do not end, but it seems that we may stop here."

This signals the end of the game. Players should take a moment to consider their experiences and debrief.

Acknowledgements

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Thanks to Peter Augerot and Holmes! for talking (specifically about how to make the game better, but also for generally never shutting up).

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ANYTHING HELPS

BY MATT BOHNHOFF

A single player story game where the player creates the diary of a homeless person. It is played on a street corner using the vehicles that stop at the intersection as a randomizer.

Anything Helps

INTRODUCTION

This is a game about homelessness. Over the course of the game you create a diary that records the daily struggles of an imagined person living on the streets. This is a single player game that requires you to spend a few hours alone near a traffic corner as you play. The isolation, the noise of vehicles, the hard surfaces you will likely stand and sit on, and more will help immerse you in the fictional world your character faces. Your character will try to find the food and shelter needed to stay alive while you narrate the adversities and tribulations he or she encounters. This is a slow game, the pace of which is set by the cycles of a traffic light. This should give you plenty of time to really think about what your character is going through and how that makes them feel.

This is not the kind of game you play to win. It doesn't promise thrilling adventure to distract you from your mundane life. Instead the goal of the game is to leave you with a new perspective on life, an awareness of people around you who previously might have been invisible. Whether or not your character succeeds or even survives the game does not impact how much you get out of the game. As the game's only player there is no one to cheat against other than yourself. If you decide to bend, supplement, or ignore the game's rules to make things easier or harder for your character no one will tell you that you are doing it wrong. You may, however, run the risk of lessening your experience. This kind of game will not appeal to everyone and that is OK.

The rules in this book will guide you but, ultimately, the responsibility for the story you record in the diary and the experience you have falls on you, the player. The rules have attempted to strike a balance; to provide enough structure to inspire your narrative while remaining flexible enough to allow a wide range of stories to be told. You fill in the blanks left between the rules, imagining both the hard world your character will face and his or her attempts to thrive in it. If you don't play both sides of the game with equal creativity and dedication the results will be disappointing. Beyond this book and the correct mindset, the other things you will need to play are an outdoor space near a traffic light, a pencil, and couple hours.

CHOOSING A SPACE

FIND A PUBLIC OUTDOOR SPACE NEAR A TRAFFIC LIGHT. CHOOSE ONE DIRECTION OF TRAFFIC TO WATCH.

Establish a play environment that is appropriate for the game. Anything Helps needs to be played in a place where vehicles stop at a traffic light. It is possible to play this game while sitting by a window in a comfortable coffee shop but doing so would rob you of a great deal of the experience. Sitting on cold hard concrete, possibly being interrupted by pedestrians, will decrease the disparity between what your character experiences and what your senses perceive. You should find a street corner in an outdoor space. It isn't necessary for it to be a bustling road with heavy traffic but a steady flow of cars is important for the game's resolution mechanic. Some public parks can make good places to play if they are near a stop light. You may stand, sit or move about your corner during play.

Once you've found a corner to play at, look at your intersection and how cars moves through it. You'll need to pick one direction of traffic, where you can see them come to a stop at the traffic light. The vehicles that stop there will be important, as explained later in this book. The intersection you select and the time of day during which you will be playing will have enormous impact of the progression of your narrative. If you decide to play this game multiple times you may want to pick different places to play it at each time.

It is also important to choose a space that is safe. You should not situate yourself in the actual road, on the curb, or otherwise too close to moving traffic. An intersection where you can observe the cars stopped at the light from a comfortable distance is necessary. Similarly, you should not come into conflict with the people around you as you play. Avoid obstructing foot traffic, trespassing on private property, or other disruptive behaviors. Some places may have laws regarding loitering in public places that need to be followed. Though the game is written for a single player, if you feel unsafe alone, choose a new space to play in or bring along companionship. Two people could play the game near each other, simultaneously but separately. If at any point consider yourself in danger, abandon the game and head for home.

You'll need to choose what to wear during the rest of the game. It is advisable to wear something comfortable, functional, and unobtrusive. You should dress for the weather, selecting hats and jackets as needed. Because this is a single player game, with you controlling both the character and his or her opposition, you never try to "become the character" as you might in a traditional roleplaying game. This is clothing, not a costume. Do not try to "look homeless" but wear articles that fit the environment you intent to play in. To do otherwise could be disrespectful of the people who are actually living on the streets. If you choose to bring a cell phone it should be silenced or turned off so that it doesn't distract you from the narrative you're creating.

FINDING YOUR CHARACTER

WRITE A SHORT BIOGRAPHY
DESCRIBE WHO YOUR CHARACTER IS AND WHAT THEY STRUGGLE WITH.

The first step in playing is to decide exactly who your character is. There are no numerical stats representing your characters abilities, as might be found in a more traditional role playing game. Instead you define your character by thinking about his or her life up to this point. Different aspects of this history will inform you about your character's abilities, the resources he or she might have access to, and the problems he or she might face.

The stereotypical homeless person that most people may think of is a middle aged man, drunk and possibly crazy, with a cart full of belongings sleeping on a bench. This is one option but homelessness can be a reality for a much wider variety of people. Each situation, each combination, presents a unique mix of difficulties. As you create your character, explore other circumstances

beyond the stereotypical to really challenge yourself. Regardless of the other aspects of your character, remember that almost no one chooses a life of homelessness. He or she was forced into this situation because there were no better options available to them.

Who is your character and why is he or she homeless? Homeless people can come from all walks of life. Ethnic minorities are more likely to experience homelessness. Teens, especially homosexual or transgender youth with unaccepting families, may leave their homes due to abuse or neglect and end up on the streets. Adults in any profession may encounter a string of misfortunes they weren't prepared for, losing jobs, spouses, and homes. Elderly without caring families may find their pensions are insufficient to support them after they can no longer work. Women may take to the streets fleeing domestic or sexual abuse.

What does you character struggle with? Homelessness is incredibly difficult. Hunger and thirst might be constant threats. Weather can be dangerously hot, cold, or wet. Lack of security and privacy in public spaces can lead to debilitating sleep deprivation and precious possessions being stolen. The homeless lack, for a variety of reasons, the usual safety nets of friends and family. There is a constant threat of unwanted attention by unsympathetic people, other homeless, and police. If a homeless person has a child or other dependant to care for any difficulty is multiplied. Physical or mental illnesses or disabilities are much more common among the homeless than the rest of society and cause additional needs. Drug addiction is also present with its own array of complications.

Where does your character live? The homeless do not have a conventional home. Beyond that, though, human ingenuity and necessity drive these people to find many kinds of places where they can sleep and store the items they can't carry. Your character might bed down on the couch of one last sympathetic friend until their patience wears thin. He or she could rent a cheap motel room, at least as long as the money holds up. A car can be a serviceable living space though it will need to be moved regularly to avoid being towed. There may be charitable shelters that can provide him or her with a reasonably safe place to sleep, assuming there is room that day. Your character might have access to an abandoned or condemned building that is warmer or drier than outdoors if their presence isn't noticed by the police. If he or she resides completely in public spaces, he or she may have a place hidden in plain sight, like a stand of sense bushes at the back of a park, to camp in.

How does your character get the things they need? Ongoing human needs for clothing, food, water, and more must be met. A desperate person might satiate some of these by scrounging though it may attract negative attention. Fruit trees that are at least partially on public space can't provide a reliable source of nutrition. Digging food scraps from trash cans and drinking from park sprinkler risks contamination. Charities, soup kitchens, and free medical clinics may provide some food, clothing, or healthcare but there may be competition for these limited resources. Money, of course, improves access to all these necessities, which a homeless person might try to acquire through various methods. Your character might have a regular job of some kind, though complications of homeless life will make it difficult to keep it for long. He or she may find irregular work doing labor or scavenging resellable trash. Panhandling is an option if the law allows it and people are generous. The apparent abundance of resources possessed by others may make theft a risky temptation.

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS

CHOOSE 1-3 DETAILS THAT BEST DEFINE YOUR CHARACTER'S SITUATION.

Once you know who your character is you should write a short biography on the first page of the diary portion of this book. Feel free to add information about where you character comes from, his or her likes and dislikes, and anything else you need to make your character feel real to you. Then you'll need to extract a few relevant bit that have the greatest impact on defining your character's situation. While all of the information you've compiled on your character will inform your narrative, these details will have real mechanical weight in the game. The details you choose will affect how difficult it is for your character. Things that make life a little easier, such as a "Job with a Regular Income" or even "Self-confidence and a Winning Smile", are positive details. Negative details, like "Alcoholic" or "Wheelchair Bound", make your character's life even more difficult. You should have one to three details, which you can jot beneath your character's biography on the first page of your diary. Obviously a character that starts with three positive details will play very differently than a game that starts with three negative details. Choose details to explore the story you want. While there are plenty of examples in this book, there is no complete list of details for this game. Name them as you need while playing.

The actual gameplay will revolve around these details and other that will continually pop up. Actions your character takes, which are explained later in this book, will determine which details persist, fade into irrelevancy, or change into new details. What happens to these details will shape your narrative, as you record it in your diary. Positive details will need to be regularly maintained or they will disappear. For example, if "Owns a Car" disappears this could be reflected in the narrative by the vehicle being towed because it sat in a parking lot too long or breaking down because your character put off an oil change for too long. Negative details get more severe if your character doesn't make successful actions to deal with them. "Wet Clothing", gained after sleeping outside in the rain, could lead to "Hypothermia" if your character doesn't manage to dry off fast enough. When details change like this, the degree by which they change is very subjective. The rules can't decree that a negative detail gets worse by three units. You, as a creative player, have to decide how they get worse based on what makes sense in your narrative. Exactly what details arise and how they progress are largely up to you.

DAYS GO BY

CREATE A NEW NEGATIVE DETAIL.

IF THE FIRST CAR TO STOP AT THE LIGHT IS BLACK, GRAY, SILVER, OR WHITE, THE DETAIL IS A PHYSICAL NEED.

IF THE FIRST CAR TO STOP IS ANOTHER COLOR,

MODIFY EXISTING DETAILS

NEGATIVE DETAILS GET WORSE.

POSITIVE DETAILS THAT WERE NOT MAINTAINED ARE LOST.

TAKE 5 ACTIONS TO DEAL WITH NEGATIVE DETAILS OR MAINTAIN POSITIVE DETAILS. WRITE A DIARY ENTRY.

The game is divided into days within your narrative. At the beginning of each day you must create a new detail reflecting an immediate need your character faces. Wait until the next time the light turns red, stopping traffic that is traveling in the direction you selected earlier. Note the color of the first vehicle to stop. If it is black, grey, silver, or white then the detail you create for you character is a physical need such "Flu" or "Dirty Shirt". If the car is any other color, like green, blue, red, yellow, gold, or brown, you should create an emotional need like "Loneliness" or "Depression". If no vehicle stops before the light turns green again create two new negative details, one physical and one emotional. Exactly what detail arises is your decision. Try asking yourself what the most likely thing to go wrong might be. What would be the most interesting thing to happen?

At the beginning of every day after the first you will probably need to modify existing details. If a positive detail wasn't maintained by a successful action on the previous day, you should remove it. You will need to change any existing negative details to reflect an increasing need. "Hunger" could easily become "Starving" if your character didn't find anything to eat. When negative details change they aren't required to stay in the physical or emotional category they may have began in. A physical detail like "Out of Meds" could become an emotional one like "Delusional Paranoia".

As the day progresses your character gets to attempt five actions to deal with his or her negative details. For each of these actions you should define for yourself what detail your character is working to improve and exactly what he or she is trying to do. They should be taken one at a time, resolving the first action, as explained in the next section, before moving on to the second and so on.

Once all five actions have been resolved you should end the day by writing down a diary entry from your character's point of view. Summarize what happened to your character, what he or she tried to do and how it worked out. Include things like how your character felt. If you, as the player, got uncomfortable sitting on a landscaping boulder, were annoyed with the wind, wished your fingers weren't cold, or were yelled at by a passer-by, consider including similar experiences in your character's dairy.

Once one day ends, another begins. Go through the process another time. Create a new negative detail. Modify existing details as necessary. Resolve five more actions for your character. Write another entry in your character's diary. Repeat until the game is over.

MEASURING SUCCESS

DECIDE WHICH DETAIL YOUR CHARACTER IS ACTING ON.

COUNT THE POSITIVE DETAILS THAT WOULD MAKE THE ACTION EASIER.

COUNT THE NEGATIVE DETAILS THAT WOULD MAKE THE ACTION HARDER.

DETERMINE THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE CARS.

BEGIN WITH THE FIRST CAR TO STOP AT THE LIGHT.

FOR EACH POSITIVE DETAIL, ADD A CAR.

FOR EACH NEGATIVE DETAIL, SUBTRACT A CAR.

OBSERVE THE COLOR OF THE CARS

IF NO CARS STOP AT THE LIGHT, THE ACTION BACKFIRES.

CREATE A NEW NEGATIVE DETAIL

IF ALL ELIGIBLE CARS ARE BLACK, GRAY, SILVER, OR WHITE THE ACTION FAILS.

IF ONE ELIGIBLE CAR IS ANOTHER COLOR, THE ACTION SUCCEEDS.

ELIMINATE THE NEGATIVE DETAIL OR MAINTAIN THE POSITIVE DETAIL.

Each time you character attempts an action, the success of that action is resolved using the colors of the vehicles that stop at the next red light in the direction of traffic you selected. This works very similarly to the way you decide what kind of negative detail to create at the beginning of each day with one major difference. Your character's chance of success varies depending on how the details currently in play, both positive and negative, relate to the action. If none of the details would impact the action then you would look at the color of the first car to stop to determine success. For each positive detail that would make it easier for your character to accomplish the action you may account for the color of an additional car stopped directly behind the first. For each negative aspect that would make it more difficult for the character to accomplish the action you must consider one less car. When figuring out how many cars you can consider you never include the detail that the action is trying to deal with. That means that if your character who has a "Bus Pass" and "Watch With Alarm" he or she would be more likely to succeed in eliminating "Irritated Boss" by showing up to work early, so you could look at the first vehicle that stops at the light and the next two directly behind it. Only cars that come to a stop may be considered so if only one car stops after the first before the light turns green then you only get to count two cars even if you're entitled to more. If there are more negative details than positive details, bringing the number of cars to zero or lower, then the action has no chance of success and you should try to think up something else that involves less negative details.

If all the vehicles you are allowed to consider are black, grey, silver, or white the action fails and the detail is unchanged. A negative detail like "Holes in Shoes" would remain and get worse if another

action isn't successful in dealing with it before the next day begins. Similarly a positive detail would need to be successfully maintained by another action or it would be lost the next day.

If any of the cars you can look at are another color then the action is successful. Successful actions dealing with a negative detail result in that detail being taken care of and disappearing. "Malnourished" would be eliminated if your character successfully found a good meal. Positive details are maintained by successful actions and are not in danger of vanishing at the start of the next day.

If no cars stop before the light turns green again the action backfires tragically. The detail that was being acted on is unchanged and you must add a new negative detail that makes sense in the narrative given the detail the character was trying to act on. For instance if the character was trying to maintain "Staying in Steve's Spare Room" by helpfully cooking breakfast, an accidental grease fire could result in "Steve is Pissed Off". Now the character must use another action to successfully maintain "Staying in Steve's Spare Room" or it will disappear at the beginning of the next day and do something else to placate "Steve is Pissed Off" or it will get worse.

THINGS MIGHT HAPPEN

If you receive a high five from a pedestrian, create a new positive detail.

If a police car stops at the light, choose a new direction of traffic.

Any time a pedestrian walks by you during play you may put up your hand, smile if you like, and say "high five". You should not say or do anything else. If the pedestrian gives you a high five then something and lucky happens to your character. You may add on new positive detail of your choosing, describing for yourself what just benefited your character. The only restriction to what positive detail your character can gain, beyond it needing to make sense in the narrative, is that you must remain homeless unless you meet the requirements described in the next section of this book.

If a police car stops at the light in the direction of traffic you chose, you must select a new direction of traffic to use. While many cops are compassionate and will help everyone they can within the bounds of their job, it is frequently their duty to enforce anti-loitering laws. The homeless must can't linger too long without their presence becoming a criminal act. If another police car stops in your new traffic direction, you must choose a third direction that you have not used before. You may not reuse a direction until you have used all the directions a your intersection.

There is a small chance that while playing someone will mistake you for a panhandler and give you money. Obviously you should not be soliciting such gifts but it might happen anyway. If this happens consider giving the money to charity. There are many worthy organizations that use donations to help the homeless.

ENDING THE GAME

If things death is the only way things can get worse, your character dies.

IF YOU RECEIVE A HIGH FIVE AFTER DEALING WITH ALL THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS, YOU CHARACTER CAN ESCAPE HOMELESSNESS.

IF TWO WEEKS PASS, THE GAME ENDS WITHOUT RESOLUTION.

The game can end in three ways. Your character could die, over come with negative details. He or she could escape homelessness. If neither of those things happen by the end of two weeks the game ends anyway, the fate of your character unresolved.

There may come a point where you are required to make a detail worse but, due to the overwhelming weight of a number of advanced negative details, you simply can't think of a way things could get worse other than your character dying. If that's really case, after thinking about it for a couple of minutes, let that be your character's final detail. He or she can pass away, ending the game prematurely.

If your character has a really good day, during which he or she has dealt with all the available negative aspects and maintained all the available positive aspects then if you get a high five from a passing pedestrian your character can escape homelessness. Your character's life is together enough that he or she can rent an apartment. Create a new positive aspect to reflect their new stable housing situation and end the game. Your character might have slid back into homelessness if the narrative had continued but, for the moment, they can live a normal life in a safe place.

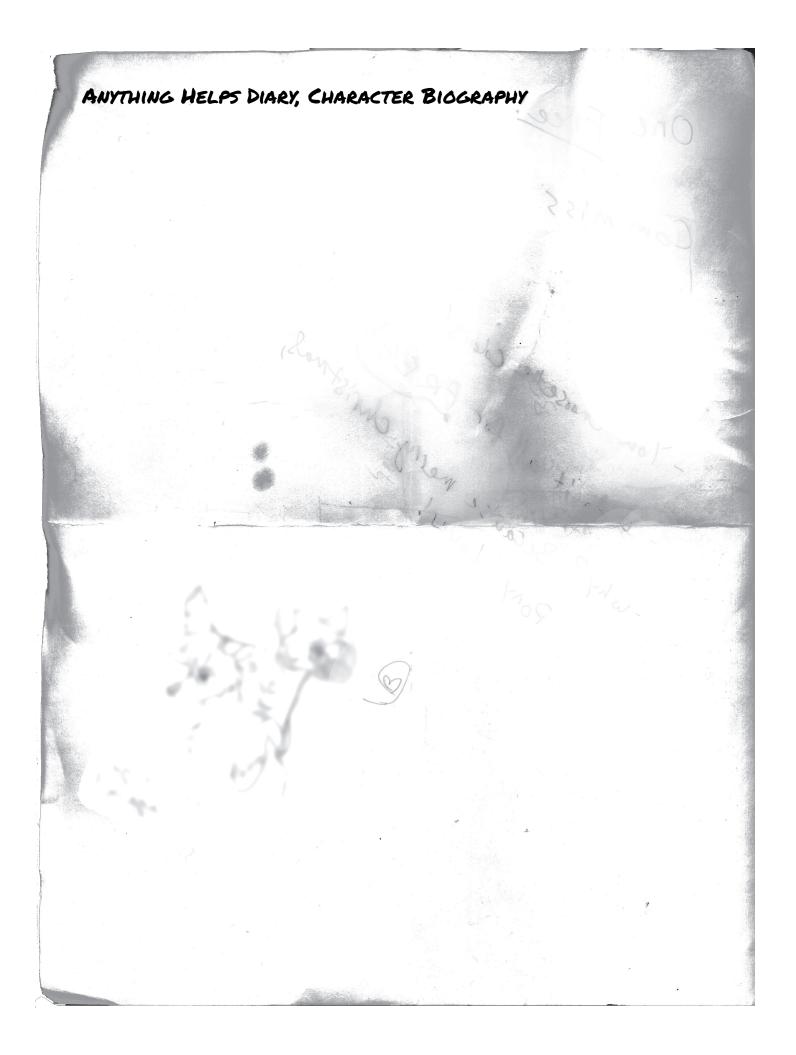
If fourteen day pass in the game and you character remains homeless the game comes to an end for you but not for him or her. You walk away from your street corner and your character's life. He or she becomes a stranger you no longer know. For some people homelessness is a temporary circumstance but for others it is a persistent reality that lasts longer than individual relationships.

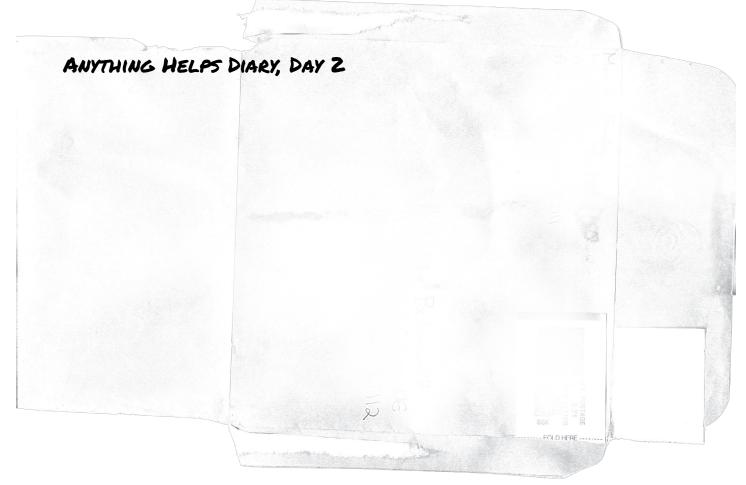
Regardless of how the game ends for you, take some time to think about what your character went through, what he or she experienced. Read through the diary your created. Be grateful that homeless is so easy for you to leave behind today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

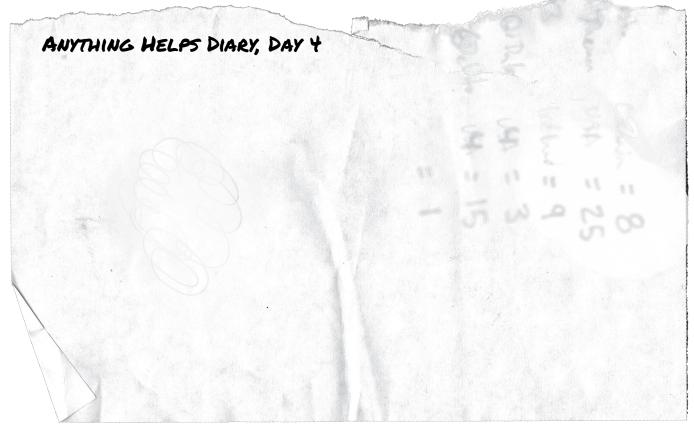
Written for the Golden Cobra Challenge 2015 by Matt Bohnhoff. Text was set in Permanent Marker and Open Sans Light, both released under the Apache License 2.0. Thanks to Andrew Fearnside, Freeman Faust, and Sara Williamson for discussion and guidance and Leonard Begaye and Pinkie Guy for playtesting.

If you have questions, comments, or would like to share your experiences, direct them to matt.bohnhoff@gmail.com



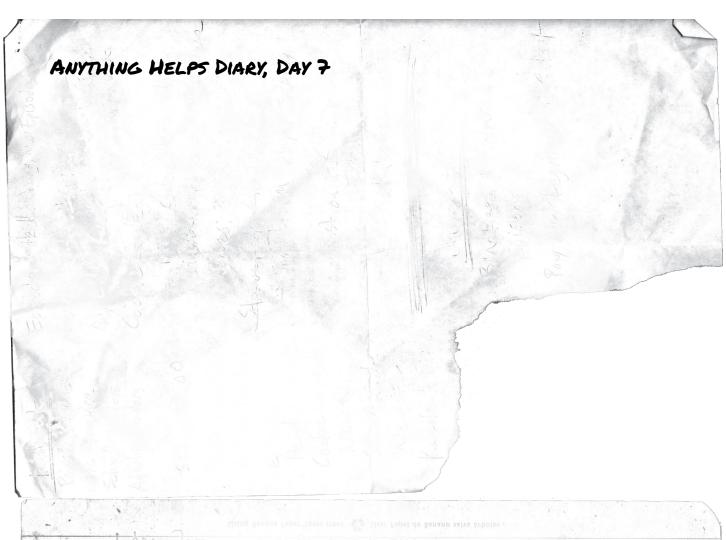






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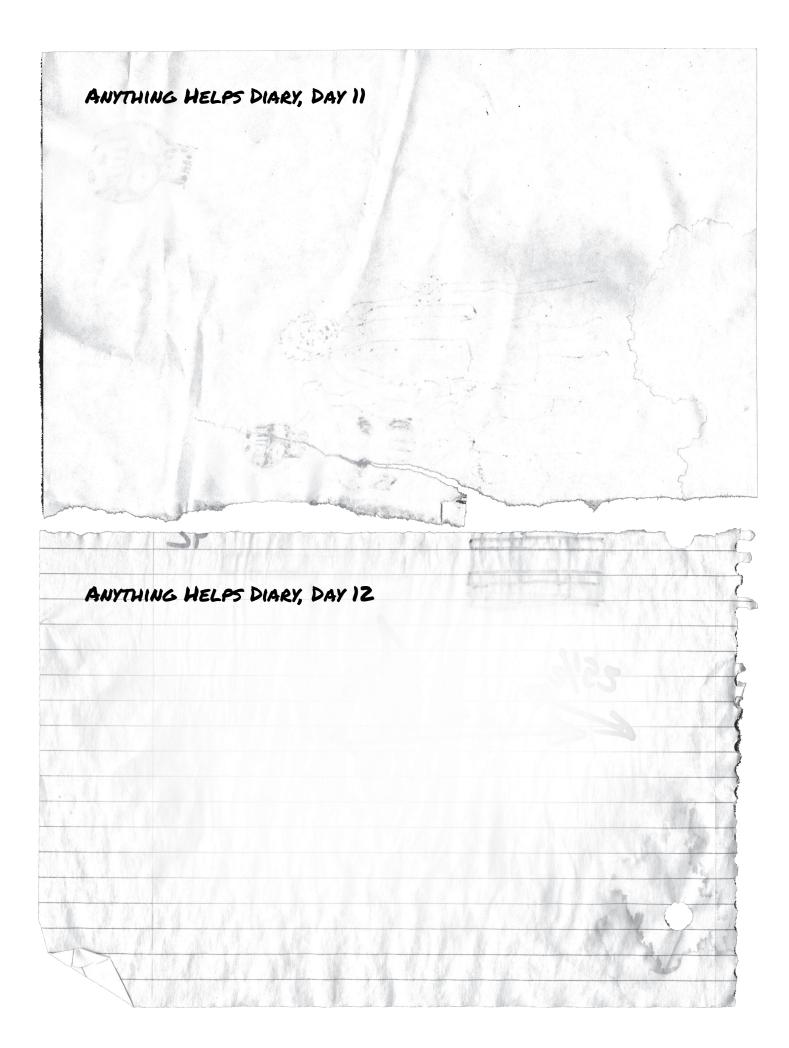
Anything Helps Diary, Day 6

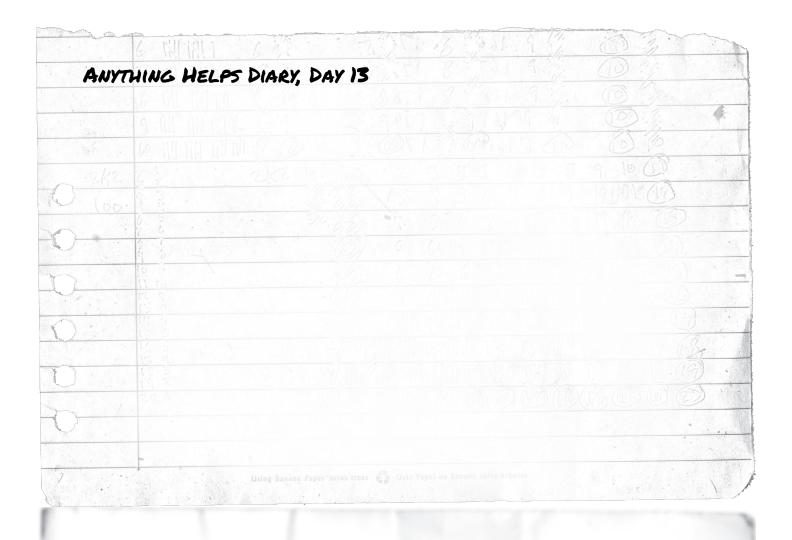


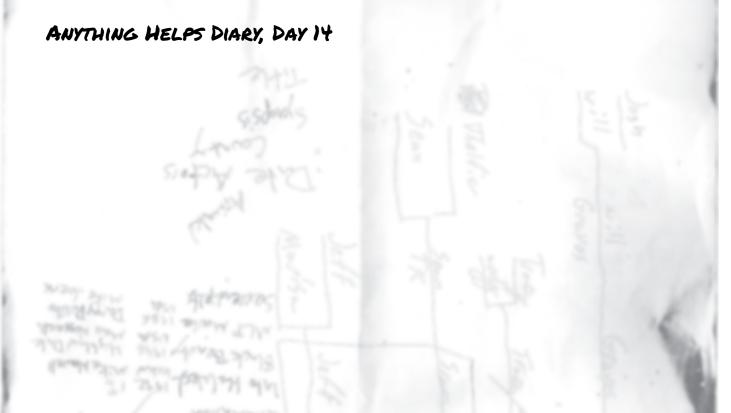
ANYTHING HELPS DIARY, DAY 8

need simultaneously then the character has managed to find enough stability in the streets and into a more conventional living arra. P. YAQ. YAAID CAJJAH QUIHTYUAA complications as needed, and then can be seen from each need, coming up these things the player should define for themselves what need they can only the seen things the player should define for themselves what need they can only the player should define for themselves what need they can only the player should define for themselves what need they can only the player should define for themselves what need they can be near the player these to care for a character's needs, the success of that attempt using the color of the first vehicle to stop at the next red light in the nearest land intersection the player is near. If no care stop during the next cycle of the light had beackfires tragically and the player is near. If no care stop during the next cycle of the light had beackfires tragically and the player removes another stone from a near the light to that needs pile. If the car is any other color the attempt is not successful and a captured to that needs pile. Before moving on, the player should take a mannar to capture and and and and any their success or failure looked like, what happened in the name in the near a night five. They should not say anything else or do anything else. If the potential gives may and a five then something unexpected and lucky happens to the character. The player may add a

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AS WE KNOW IT BY ALEX CARLSON

As a human survivor of the alien invasion, what is your fate?

What is the fate of your fellow survivors?

As we know it

a game for four players played in 60 minutes by alex carlson

for the players:

Aliens are real. Real enough to have conquered the world in less than a week. You have survived by hiding. You have enough supplies to last... for a time. You have a phone that hasn't worked since they showed up.

You may choose your own name. Who's going to correct you?

There's someone you want to see again. Who's to say they didn't make it?

materials:

Ideally, a space where there is one closet for each player. At minimum, a space where there are four isolated areas for each player where there is no possible audio or visual communication possible between players.

Ideally, six prepaid cell phones with texting capabilities, one for each player and two for the facilitator. At minimum, one phone with texting capabilities for each player and two for the facilitator.

Printed Fates and Changes cards.

players: If the facilitator has provided you a prepaid cell phone, awesome! If not, and you are using your own phone, please ignore non-game related texts, phone calls, apps, and other notifications while playing the game

content notes:

This game will deal with discrimination, persecution, isolation, and character death, suicide, and mutilation.

If players have issues with confined spaces, this may not be the larp for them, but accommodations of alternate spaces are acceptable (the game will still work). Players with difficulties reading or writing texts should be allowed to use adaptive technologies as needed.

If players need to leave their "closet" for explicitly non-game related reasons, they should be allowed to, but their phone should be confiscated while they are out. Sensations like needing to go to the bathroom or feeling trapped are intended to be incorporated into the feelings of play, but are not worth maintaining to the point of causing harm.

the next page is for facilitator eyes only. contains spoilers.

for the facilitator:

You will be playing two roles in this game. The first is running the Humanity Resistance Network (HRN). In this role, you will be sending out scheduled updates as outlined below, and letting players know when and how they can communicate with each other.

Assign each phone you are using a letter, A through F, and give the players phones A through D. For HRN communications, you will use Phone E.

Your second role is to pose as a human survivor with Phone F. Your agenda is to convince the survivors to give up the names and phone numbers of their friends and, ultimately, the HRN. You may only use Phone F to contact one person, as outlined in the timeline at **19:00**, unless that person gives you other phone numbers. It is otherwise up to you what to say. Perhaps you know about a news event before it happens. Maybe you want to convince them to stay hidden. It's up to you, as long as you pretend to be on their side. Optional: You may enlist a second facilitator for this role.

Before play, make sure to test phones so that you know everyone can send and receive text messages. Let the players know that if they want to leave their closet, they need to text "Coming out." to the HRN number so you can be there to greet them. If multiple people come out at once, address them one at a time.

coming out:

There will be an assortment of Fates that can befall a player that comes out and define what happens to their character. Fates are assigned as such: the first player out chooses one card from the deck. That is their Fate. The second and third players draw two Fates, choose one, and put the other back. The fourth player out looks at the three remaining Fates and chooses one.

Players also get to choose a Change that happens in the world when they come out. The first player gets to draw three changes and choose one. The second and third players get to draw two and choose one, and the fourth chooses one.

If a player comes out before 17 minutes have passed, that player automatically gets the Fate, "You were spotted by an alien. They killed you. You are dead. You will no longer be able to play this game." They also get no Change.

If a player does not wish to accept their Fate, they may immediately return to their closet. This means they do not count towards the number of people who have come out for purposes of drawing Fate or Change cards. They may choose to come out again later.

This game is designed for an actual play time of exactly sixty minutes. Please create time before and after for warm ups and discussion. The texting should happen on schedule, but things happen. Please include every step as close to on time as possible.

timeline:

Time starts at 0:00 when players enter their "closets".

5:00: Send this text to all Phones, using Phone E - "This is the Humanity Resistance Network. Alien forces claim to have eliminated all human life, but they're wrong. Attempts are currently being made to establish new lines of communication. If you can read this message, please monitor your phone for further updates and stay inside."

7:00: Send this text to Phones A, B, and C, using Phone E - "HRN UPDATE: If you see :) ==+ sas 294301-23 /line;; immediately =P jkjkjk Please stay inside."

10:00: Send this text to Phones B and D, using Phone E - "HRN UPDATE: Aliens found a human safe house. Most humans killed, some taken captive. Please stay inside."

12:00: Send this text to Phones B, C, and D, using Phone E - "HRN UPDATE: We have been able to establish limited text communication. This phone number should connect you to another survivor. Please stay inside." Then text the number for Phone A to Phone B and the number for Phone C to Phone D.

17:00: Send this text to all players - "HRN UPDATE: Aliens have offered 'leniency to any human that surrenders itself peacefully. It will be sterilized and allowed to live its life in captivity.' Please stay inside."

19:00: Use Phone F to contact Phone A. Feel free to converse as described previously.

20:00: Send this text to all players - "HRN UPDATE: We have been able to establish further text communication. This phone number should connect you to another survivor. Please stay inside." Then send the number for Phone C to Phone A.

25:00: Send this text to Phones A, C and D - "HRN UPDATE: New safehouse established in Colorado Springs. Fresh food and water available. Only seek it out if you can reach it safely without being followed. Otherwise, please stay inside."

30:00: Send this text to Phones A and D - "HRN UPDATE: We have been able to establish audio communication. Calls are vulnerable to surveillance."

45:00: Send this text to Phones B and C - "HRN UPDATE: Former alien general publicly decries wanton slaughter of humans."

55:00: Send this text to all phones - "HRN UPDATE: HRN leader assassinated. We are still here and they can not silence us."

60:00: Game end

fate:

you are killed by an alien militia in less than a week.

fate:

you see so many of your fellow humans suffer horrible fates that you decide to take your own life within a month.

fate:

you surrender or are captured by the alien government. they chemically sterilize you, and you live out your days as a servant in alien society.

fate:

you spend your days on the run. you have no home and no source of clean water or food. you might survive, barely.

fate:

you find a safe place to live with a human companion.
you might be able to produce a single child.

fate:

you publicly join the resistance and are assassinated. humanity is inspired by your sacrifice. you are remembered.

change: in less than a year, a human territory is established.	change: laws are passed banning maltreatment of humans.
change: enough humans survive so that the species will not die out.	change: alien entertainment portrays a human character. it is inaccurate.
change: a human learns alien law. they are allowed to practice as lawyer.	change: humans are allowed to reproduce.

GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

BEFORE YOU LEAVE BY KHELREN AND STEVE JAKOUBOVITCH

A 2-hour-long game for two players about grief, communication and the memories that remain after you've lost someone.

Before you leave

A 2-hour-long game for two players about grief, communication and the memories that remain after you've lost someone.

By Khelren and Steve Jakoubovitch

We have been a couple. We had moved in the same apartment and we were making plans about our future together.

And you've died.

Maybe it has been an accident. Or illness. Maybe it has been something else. It doesn't really matter, even if it still hurts so bad: I'll just have to learn to live without you. But for now, I remember the moments we've spent together. And somehow, I feel that remembering you is bringing you back.

In *Before you leave*, two players will play the role of a couple. One of them, the *deceased*, died but will be temporarily brought back into existence by the memories of the *widowed*.

Inspirations

- Les Petites Choses Oubliées by Sylvie Guillaume and Christoph Boeckle
- Ghost by Jerry Zucker
- Always by Steven Spielberg
- PS I Love you by Richard LaGravenese
- The Fountain by Darren Aronofsky
- The Sixth Sense by M. Night Shyamalan
- Brown Bunnies by Vincent Gallo
- I say a Little Prayer by Tor Kjetil Edland
- Snow by Matthijs Holter
- The track Over the Distance from the videogame Ouendan
- Kishibe no tabi (Journey to the Shore) by Kiyoshi Kurosawa
- *Journey* by thatgamecompany
- Breaking the ice by Emily Care Boss

Setup

In order to play Before you leave, you need:

A place with at least two rooms.

One of the room will be the *outside* room and the players will use it to pretend the characters are outside, to play the scenes outside the apartment. The other room will be the *inside* room.

If you can play in a real apartment, that's even better. Just decide before play which room will be considered to be the *outside* room, the rest of the apartment being used for the actual inside scenes.

- Six or seven items from daily life.

They must be brought into the game by the player who will play the *deceased* and scattered before play across the apartment or the inside room.

Also, they must be obvious, don't play hide and seek. You should even use some black ribbons to make them stand out even more.

- Some post-its.

The *deceased* will use them to communicate during a scene.

Before play (~15 minutes)

The relationship

You don't have to know everything about the characters before playing, in fact it's best to play to find out about them, but you can decide already some details together:

- What are their names?
- What are their ages and genders?

And maybe:

- Where is their apartment?

It's best and frankly simpler to play nowadays.

At that point, you don't need to know how the deceased died.

If you are not playing in a real apartment, take the time to describe together the fictional apartment.

Safety

There are only two players and no facilitator role *per say* because this game is about intimacy.

The two players will have to touch each other's hands and shoulders. It is possible that the game will end with the two players in each other's arms. Discuss with your gaming partner to know if these physical contacts are allowed. If not, decide together of other limits. Instead of touching shoulders, you may touch elbows; instead of taking the other into your arms, you may only shake hands. Either way, it's perfectly fine.

During the game, if you want to interrupt the scene because you feel uncomfortable, you can say "CUT" and the other player must stop immediately what he or she is doing. Take a moment to discuss what happened and made someone uncomfortable before continuing the game. You may even decide to stop playing. Either way, don't be judgmental and try to understand the problem.

Exploring our memories (~1h15)

The game begins in the couple's apartment. The *deceased* has died and the *widowed* is alone, wandering around and living their daily life.

The *widowed* will trigger precious memories that they shared with the *deceased*. But memories are subjective, aren't they, and the point of view of the *widowed* may be different from the *deceased*'s.

However, these memories will somehow summon the *deceased* but their presence will be faint at the beginning, their means of communication limited and frustrating. This will change during the course of the game though and the *deceased* will be able to better interact with the *widowed*.

First memory: moving in the apartment

What the widowed can do

The *widowed* will narrate a memory about the moving in the apartment. Before they begin, they can wander through the apartment without touching the items.

The narration is a monologue which duration is chosen freely by the *widowed* but cannot exceed a couple of minutes.

What the deceased can do

The *deceased* must follow the *widowed* during that scene and stay behind them. Try to stay close, like if you were stalking on them.

The *deceased* can only clap their hands, but only once (don't play "one knock is yes, two knocks is no"), each time they want to express something during the recollection, for example disagreement.

What the players cannot do

They cannot go to the *outside* room.

They cannot face each other.

They cannot touch each other.

Transition

The scene ends when the widowed finishes their narration.

Second memory: an item (1/4)

What the widowed can do

The *widowed* chooses an item and narrates a memory somehow related about it. You should mime using this item for a moment before the recollection, if possible.

For example, you can choose a book and start browsing it.

The narration is a monologue which duration is chosen freely by the *widowed* but cannot exceed about 5 minutes.

What the deceased can do

The deceased stays behind the widowed.

During the *widowed*'s recollection, they will use post-its to write down single words and single words only, not sentences, no punctuation, no preposition. You should stick them on a flat surface, on the same spot, or, for more dramatic purpose, you can stick them across the room.

What the players cannot do

They cannot go to the *outside* room.

They cannot face each other.

They cannot touch each other.

Transition

When the recollection and the writing are done, the *deceased* touches the shoulder of the *widowed*. The *widowed* can now take the time to look at the post-its.

Third memory: an item (2/4)

What the widowed can do

As in the previous scene, the *widowed* chooses an item and narrates a memory somehow related about it.

You should mime using this item for a moment before the recollection, if possible.

The widowed can be face-to-face to the deceased and look into their eyes.

The narration is a monologue which duration is chosen freely by the *widowed* but cannot exceed about 5 minutes.

What the deceased can do

The deceased can stay in front of the widowed.

The deceased can shake their head or make facial expressions to show their feelings.

What the players cannot do

They cannot go to the *outside* room.

They cannot touch each other.

The deceased cannot talk.

Transition

The scene ends when the *widowed* finishes their narration.

Fourth memory: an item (3/4)

What the widowed can do

As in the previous scene, the *widowed* chooses an item and narrates a memory somehow related about it.

You should mime using this item for a moment before the recollection, if possible.

The widowed can be face-to-face to the deceased and look into their eyes.

The narration is a monologue which duration is chosen freely by the *widowed* but cannot exceed about 5 minutes.

What the deceased can do

The deceased can stay in front of the widowed.

The *deceased* will be allowed to talk at the end of the recollection. They can contradict or add something to the recollection but cannot exceed a couple of minutes.

What the players cannot do

They cannot go to the *outside* room.

They cannot touch each other.

The deceased cannot express their feelings.

The widowed cannot react to the deceased's speech.

Transition

The scene ends when the deceased finishes their narration.

Fifth memory: an item (4/4)

What the deceased can do

The deceased brings to the widowed a last item and describes it, establishing it.

For example, they can hand a book saying "that's the book I hated so much" or a kitchen knife saying "that's the kitchen knife you've been always so afraid to use".

The deceased can then stay in front of the widowed.

Lastly, the *deceased* will be allowed to talk at the end of the *widowed*'s recollection. They can contradict or add something to the recollection and express their feelings, but cannot exceed about 5 minutes.

What the widowed can do

When the *deceased* gives the *widowed* an item of their choice, the *widowed* narrates a memory somehow related about it.

You should mime using this item for a moment before the recollection, if possible.

The widowed can be face-to-face to the deceased and look into their eyes.

The narration is a monologue which duration is chosen freely by the *widowed* but cannot exceed about 5 minutes.

The *widowed* can reach out for the hand of the *deceased* at any point during the *deceased*'s narration and touch their hand for a brief moment.

What the players cannot do

They cannot go to the *outside* room.

They cannot touch each other unless noted otherwise.

The widowed cannot react to the deceased's speech.

Transition

The scene ends when the *deceased* finishes their narration.

The *deceased* takes the hand of the *widowed* and leads them into the *outside* room, as if they were going outside the apartment.

Sixth memory: an important place outside the apartment

What the deceased can do

The *deceased* describes an important place for the couple, establishing the scene of the recollection.

For example, they can describe a church, saying "it's a small church where we have attended our first wedding together" or a bridge, saying "that's the bridge where we had our first kiss". Don't forget to describe smell, sight, sound and also feelings about that place.

The *deceased* can move freely and you should try to act as if you were playing the scene from the recollection, if possible.

The deceased can also hold the widowed's hand.

As in the previous scene, the *deceased* will be allowed to talk at the end of the *widowed*'s recollection. They can contradict or add something to the recollection and express their feelings, but cannot exceed about 5 minutes.

What the widowed can do

When the *deceased* describes an important place for the couple, the *widowed* narrates a memory somehow related about it. The narration is a monologue which duration is chosen freely by the *widowed* but cannot exceed about 5 minutes.

The *widowed* can move freely and you should try to act as if you were playing the scene from the recollection, if possible.

The widowed can also hold the deceased's hand.

What the players cannot do

They cannot go to the inside room.

They cannot touch each other unless noted otherwise.

The widowed cannot react to the deceased's speech.

Transition

The scene ends when the *deceased* finishes their narration and brings back the *widowed* to the apartment.

Seventh memory: an important outsider

What the deceased can do

The *deceased* describes someone important for the couple, and may establish the scene of the recollection in general.

For example, they can describe a third person, saying "your mother has hated me from the very beginning. Remember when we had that conversation, just after this awful dinner?" or a lover, saying "and then I found these love letters from that woman, waiting for you to come back from work" or a child, saying "our little baby boy looked exactly as you, right? That first night, when we came home from the hospital, we were listening to his noisy breathing, fearing they would have stopped". Try to describe that person with some physical details and also some character behaviors. You can also set the scene but remember that the memory is mostly about that person, the location is not the main focus here.

The *deceased* can move freely and you should try to act as if you were playing the scene from the recollection, if possible.

The deceased can also hold the widowed's hand.

As in the previous scene, the *deceased* will be allowed to talk at the end of the *widowed*'s recollection. They can contradict or add something to the recollection and express their feelings but cannot exceed about 5 minutes.

What the widowed can do

When the *deceased* describes an important person for the couple, the *widowed* narrates a memory somehow related about it. The narration is a monologue which duration is chosen freely by the *widowed* but cannot exceed about 5 minutes.

The *widowed* can move freely and you should try to act as if you were playing the scene from the recollection, if possible.

The widowed can also hold the deceased's hand.

What the players cannot do

They cannot go to the *inside* room.

They cannot touch each other unless noted otherwise.

The widowed cannot react to the deceased's speech.

Transition

The scene ends when the *deceased* finishes their narration and brings back the *widowed* to the apartment.

Eighth memory: recollection from the deceased

What the deceased can do

The *deceased* narrates a memory related to the couple freely. The narration is a monologue which duration is chosen freely by the *deceased* but should not exceed about 5 minutes.

For example, the memory can be about the death of the *deceased*. It should be something really important to the *deceased*, this is after all their only chance to express themselves freely.

The *deceased* can move freely and you should try to act as if you were playing the scene from the recollection, if possible.

The deceased can also hold the widowed's hand.

What the widowed can do

The *widowed* will be allowed to talk at the end of the *deceased*'s recollection. They can contradict or add something to the recollection and express their feelings but cannot exceed about 5 minutes.

The *widowed* can move freely and you should try to act as if you were playing the scene from the recollection, if possible.

The widowed can also hold the deceased's hand.

What the players cannot do

They cannot go to the *inside* room.

They cannot touch each other unless noted otherwise.

The deceased cannot react to the widowed's speech.

Transition

The scene ends when the widowed finishes their narration.

Epilogue (~15 minutes)

After that last memory, the bond between the couple is strong enough for the *deceased* to manifest themselves. It's time for a last goodbye, for a last physical interaction, be it good or bad. The decision are theirs: do they trust each other enough? Is this a ghost of sorrow and hatred, hoping to strangle the living?

In this last scene, the players are standing face to face, a step away from each other. They then close their eyes and choose either to:

- open their arms to welcome the other.
- show a fist (for the *deceased*) to kill or raise a stopping hand (for the *widowed*) to reject.
 When they have checked together that their decision is made, they can open their eyes.

If both players have opened their arms...

For a short last moment, the *deceased* can manifest themselves physically, as if they would have a body.

Both players step forward and hold themselves into their arms.

They collaboratively narrate this last moment between their characters. The narration is a dialog which duration is chosen freely by both of them but should not exceed about 10 minutes.

The scene ends when they finish their narration. The *deceased* takes a few steps back and leaves the room, disappearing from reality.

If the widowed has opened their arms and the deceased has showed a fist...

The widowed took a risk and the deceased may hurt or even kill them.

The *deceased* narrates what they intend to do to the *widowed*. The narration is a monologue which duration is chosen freely by the *deceased* but should not exceed a couple of minutes. The scene ends when the *deceased* finishes their narration. They take a few steps back and leave the room, disappearing from reality.

If the widowed has raised a stopping hand...

The widowed has chosen to reject the deceased and the deceased is trapped into limbo.

The deceased takes a few steps back and leave the room, disappearing from reality.

Debriefing (~15 minutes)

Take the time to discuss with your gaming partner what happened during the game. You can also take the time to answer some of these questions: What do you think about the characters' relationship? What do you think will happen to the *widowed*? Will the *widowed* hold dear these memories? or will they fade away? Which memory has been the most touching to you? Did you like the game? Were you comfortable playing it?

Thanks for playing!

GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

BETTER BY LAUREL HALBANY

BETTER is a freeform game meant to explore themes of group dynamics, social pressure, and consensus reality. Each player is part of an experiment, testing a new therapy protocol that allows group opinions to shape individual reality.

BETTER

A FREEFORM EXPERIMENT IN CONSENSUS REALITY

PROJECT SUMMARY

BETTER is a freeform game meant to explore themes of group dynamics, social pressure, and consensus reality. Each player is part of an experiment, testing a new therapy protocol that allows group opinions to shape individual reality.

BETTER requires four players and takes about an hour and a half to play.

STUDY DESIGN

BETTER was written by Laurel Halbany. It is inspired in part by the Asch Experiments on conformity.

ETHICAL OVERSIGHT

Research projects involving human beings should be careful to protect the mental and physical welfare of the participants. So should games.

Have an out-of-character, pre-game discussion about physical and emotional safety before play starts. Discuss what signals or code words (like "brake" and "cut") players will use to signal that interactions need to slow down or even stop immediately. Some groups may prefer to have a list of topics that will be off limits in-game for discussion or character background.

In-game, the experiment protocol strictly prohibits physical contact between subjects. There should be no reason for players to touch.

While the game assumes an isolated, locked room where food and drink are prohibited, the players should feel free to pause the game if they have to get some water, take a bio break or otherwise attend to their well-being.

PREPARATION

Print and cut out the Character Cards and the Attitude Cards at the end of these rules. Arrange the Attitude Cards into four stacks, face down, with two Soft and two Hard cards in each stack. A little later, these will be distributed to the players so they can build their characters.

Arrange four chairs so that they all face inward toward a central point. The chairs should be equally spaced, with enough room to let the players get up and switch chairs. Do not arrange the chairs around a table; the area in the middle should be empty, so there is no physical barrier to act as a buffer.

METHODOLOGY

The game is played in four rounds. Each player has the same character =throughout all four rounds. However, the *roles* played by the characters change each round. These roles are determined which chair they are sitting in. When a character moves into a different chair, they are assigned the role associated with that chair.

At the beginning of the game, choose one chair; whoever it sitting in that chair at the beginning of the round takes the role of the Subject. The chair

directly across from it is for the Peer Facilitator. The chairs to either side are occupied by the Examiners. The roles assigned to these chairs stay constant throughout the game. When a person changes chairs at the close of a round, the role they will play in the next round also changes.

At the end of a round, everyone gets up and moves to the chair to their left. The Peer Facilitator and the Subject then become Examiners for the next round, while the Examiners become Peer Facilitator and Subject. Over the course of the game, everyone takes the role of the Peer Facilitator once, the Subject once, and an Examiner twice.

Hand out the Character Cards. Give everyone time to look over their cards, make choices about their background, and think about a character concept that fits the broad strokes of the character.

- Patients have a problematic belief or emotion. The character may or may not know that the belief or emotion is problematic.
- Participants do not have a problematic belief or emotion, or if they do, it's not the reason they are here.
- Voluntary means the character is here of their own free will.
- **Involuntary** means a person or circumstance (other than a problematic mental state) forced them to be here.

Each card lists two pairs of opposed statements. The player should choose

one statement from each pair. This is the character's background.

Next, the player should choose a belief or emotion, in tune with their character's status, that will be addressed when they are a Subject. For example, a Participant/Involuntary may have committed a crime and joined the experiment as a condition of parole, but believes their crime was justified. Another example might be a Patient/Voluntary who believes their enjoyment in harming others is immoral. While a player may choose multiple emotional threads for their character, ultimately only one will be addressed during their time in the Subject role, and it is up to the group which one that is.

After they have made their choices, distribute the Attitude Cards, which describe the character's approach to solving other people's problems. Hand each player a stack of Attitude Cards face down, making sure that players sitting across from each other get different stacks (i.e. one gets a stack of Soft cards and one gets a stack of Hard cards); this ensures that in every round, there will be one Examiner with a Soft approach and one Examiner with a Hard approach. Each player should pick one of the two cards and give the other back to you. These cards are kept secret; the players should not tell each other what they chose.

Once everyone is seated and has finished developing a character concept, it's time to begin the experiment. Explain to your players that the experiment is being conducted in room which they cannot leave before the experiment is over. Shortly, a researcher will give them instructions through a speaker.

Then read the 'Instructions' section to them out loud, pausing where indicated, and stating the 'name' of the character sitting in the Subject chair (Twill, Loden, Madras or Voile) where indicated. Once you have finished, the game begins.

INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome, and thank you for your participation.

To protect your privacy, each of you has been assigned a pseudonym for the duration of the experiment. Do not reveal your real name to any other participant or ask any other participant to tell you theirs. I will pause while you take turns telling each other your pseudonyms.

Thank you.

The experiment consists of four rounds of therapy. In each round, one of you – beginning with [NAME], will be the Subject. The person sitting across from the Subject is the Peer Facilitator. The two people sitting to either side of the Subject are the Examiners. Each round lasts no more than fifteen minutes. It is the job of the Peer Facilitator to keep time and to call the vote.

At the beginning of each round, the Subject states their name, their background, and what has led them to participate in this experiment. The Examiners may then ask the Subject whatever questions they believe are necessary to inquire about the belief or emotion, and the reasons that the

Subject holds that belief or emotion. Only the Examiners are required to ask questions, and only the Subject is required to answer them. The Peer Facilitator may not ask questions.

I will explain the voting process shortly. Before I begin, please take a deep breath, inhaling and exhaling slowly. I will pause while you do so.

Thank you. The psychoactive agent used in this experiment has been aerosolized and was introduced into the air of the experiment room approximately twenty minutes ago. It is odorless, and you will not experience any side effects for the duration of the experiment. The agent permanently alters mental and emotional states in response to consensus belief.

When the Peer Facilitator announces that time is up, the Examiners and the Peer Facilitator determine which belief or emotion held by the Subject must be resolved. Once this has been decided, the Peer Facilitator counts to three, and on "three" each participant holds out their hand to indicate their vote. An open, flat hand is "yes"; a closed fist is "no".

A majority "yes" vote means that the Subject retains the belief or emotion. A tie, or a majority "no" vote means that the Subject rejects it, absolutely and permanently. The effects of the psychoactive agent make it impossible to reject the results of the vote. It is final, absolute and irrevocable.

At the conclusion of the vote, please stand up and move to the chair to your left. When everyone is seated, a new round begins. The experiment continues

for four rounds, so that you will each spent one round as Peer Facilitator and Subject, and two alternate rounds as Examiners.

Please be assured that your participation will be of great scientific importance. We hope and anticipate that it is also beneficial to you.

FOLLOW-UP

After four rounds, the experiment is complete and the characters are free to leave. That is, the game ends. Take time to decompress, discuss the emotions and experiences that came up during the game. Stand up and stretch. Pass around everyone's Character Cards and Attitude Cards. Make plans to get together for your next game.

PUBLICATION POLICY

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TWILL

(Patient/Voluntary)

Your reason for participating in this experiment is to seek help for a serious problem. You made the decision to participate. Feel free to choose whatever reason you believe fits your status.

I regularly spend time with my family.

or, I don't have regular contact with my family.

I have a supportive family.

or, I have an unsupportive family.

LODEN

(Participant/Voluntary)

You don't think anything is wrong with you. There is some other reason that you have agreed to participate in this experiment. Feel free to choose whatever reason you believe fits your status.

I have been paid to be here.

or, I am here to help with important research.

My reason for being here directly benefits me.

<u>or</u>, My reason for being here only benefits someone else.

MADRAS

(Patient/Involuntary)

You are present without your consent; some person or institution with power over you gave consent for you. Feel free to choose whatever reason you believe fits your status.

Consent to this experiment was given without my knowledge.

or, Consent to this experiment with given with my knowledge but against my will.

Whoever made this choice for me had good intentions.

or, Whoever made this choice for me acted out of bad motives.

VOILE

(Participant/Involuntary)

You don't think anything is wrong with you. Someone, or your circumstances, forced you to participate. Feel free to choose whatever reason you believe fits your status.

I am here because of circumstances in my life. or, Some person or institution forced me to participate.

I regret the reasons I am here.

or, I don't regret the reasons I was forced to come here, and I'm only participating because I have no alternative.

[soft]	[hard]
The best approach to helping others	The best approach to helping others
is making sure they feel good about	is making sure they take a hard,
themselves, and that they believe	honest look at themselves.
themselves to be decent people.	
[soft]	[hard]
People should face adversity only if	People should face adversity right
and when they're ready, so that it	away, even if it's painful, so they can
doesn't overwhelm them.	overcome it.
[soft]	[hard]
	Everyone should accept the
Everyone deserves a second chance.	consequences of their actions so
	that they'll do better next time.
[soft]	[hard]
People can only change when they	People need to be encouraged, and
are ready and willing to change.	sometimes pushed, to change.
17 19	

BEYOND THE WALL

BY KIRSTEN HAGELEIT

A physical larp about life, memory, and the (re)construction of self.

Beyond the Wall

A physical larp about life, memory, and the (re)construction of self.

Meant for four players and one faciliator, but can be run with anywhere from one to six players, or played by one person entirely alone.

Runs up to two hours, possibly less, workshops and debrief included.



Concept of the larp

Beyond the Wall is a larp set between life and death.

Players create a character, first through physical expression, then through randomly-chosen emotional states, and finally through memories to interpret. At the end, each player will have a sense of who their character is, and then will decide where that character will go next.

This is meant to be a quiet, introspective, but emotionally powerful game. Players will confront the most basic human themes of life, loss, love, and remembrance. It is also a very physical game, with lots of movement and physical self-awareness, but is designed to be welcoming to people of all physical abilities. Please continue that welcome.

The larp is prefaced with physical exercises and workshops for the players to become aware of their own individual physicality, and then to change that physicality to create the beginning of their character.

Then, after a short monologue describing the place beyond the wall, the facilitator will slowly feed emotions and memories to the players, who will continue to develop their character. At the end, the characters will be finally realized, and then choose their fates—to climb the wall and return to life with its pains and joys, to rise above to the eternal stars and remain as they are forever, or to go onward into the mists beyond the wall, where their mortal burdens will be lifted, and they find peace.

Requirements

A single room without much furniture (although a few chairs are good), where the lights can be dimmed

Handouts (included), cut out and organized

One facilitator and one to six players

One person willing to larp alone (see *Single Person Rules*, preceding the handout pages)

Helpful but not required:

Some way to play white noise or atmospheric music softly in the background, to provide a sonic buffer against outside noise

Box of tissues and drinking water

Potential triggers, safety concerns, and accessibility for all participants

Emotional: This larp deals with issues of death, failing memory, and loss; has content about anger, exclusion, and aggression; and may have player-generated content about other sensitive issues. Discuss potential triggers ahead of time with all participants, and go over the cut, break, and OK signals.

If players are triggered by characters acting towards them with aggression, anger, fear, or other violent emotions, feel free to simply remove those emotions from the two Emotion handout stacks.

This larp deals with the variations in human physical ability. By default and design, it highlights the fact that all humans have limitations to their physical selves and physical abilities. This understanding may affect people emotionally.

Bodywork in general is emotionally affecting; it may bring up issues that the players themselves are unaware of. Make sure your space is as safe as you can make it, and watch each other for signs of out-of-character distress.

Physical: This larp may include touch, if the players are agreeable to it; please discuss everyone's parameters and limitations ahead of time.

This larp is very physical: it may inflame old injuries or even create new ones if players are not careful with themselves. Remind players not to push too hard, and allow people to rest when necessary.

There are also breathing exercises in the workshop portion which may cause light-headedness if done too quickly. Remind players to breathe easily, not too quickly or slowly, and relax.

Accessibility: While this larp is quite physical, it is intended to accommodate people of all physical abilities. Some ways facilitators can include everyone:

Make sure your location is large enough for wheelchairs to move and free of obstacles, such as excess furniture or loose rugs, so that people with limited balance or mobility can move safely.

Print the memories larger, or read them aloud (quietly) to players with limited vision.

Make sure chairs or benches are available for players to sit, and take breaks between exercises.

Let each player decide what they are and are not capable of, and support that choice.

Facilitator's Timetable

- I. Player's Introduction read aloud (5 minutes)
- 2. Discussion of acceptable physical touch, cut and brake signals, and "OK" signal; discussion of potential triggers for the participants. (*10 minutes*)
- 3. Opening exercises and physical workshops led by facilitator (20-30 *minutes*)

Deep breathing exercise
Physical awareness exercise
Physical exploration exercise
Physical role workshop
Creation of physical roles
Practice of physical roles
Short break; breathing and role exercise

4. Larp begins (20-45 minutes; each section runs about 5 minutes but exact timing is up to the facilitator, based on how the players progress.)

Facilitator reads beginning monologue

Spirits awake

Players inhabit physical roles and begin to explore the space and each other

First Memory: Simple Emotion

Facilitator hands out Simple Emotion slips to the players; players incorporate them into their characters, physically play out results

Second Memory: Complex Emotion

Facilitator hands out Complex Emotion slips to players; players incorporate them into their characters, physically play out results

Third Memory: Remembered Moment

Facilitator hands out one Remembered Moment slips, players incorporate them into their characters, physically and verbally play out results

Fourth Memory: Remembered Moment

Facilitator hands out one Remembered Moment slips, players incorporate them into their characters, physically and verbally play out results

Mists gather

Facilitator calls for the players to consolidate their characters

Characters tell each other about who they were

Characters make final decisions, and leave to their chosen destinations

Spirits depart

Facilitator reads final monologue

- 5. Larp ends
- 6. De-role and debrief (10-20 minutes)
 Verbal check-in with players
 Deep breathing exercise
 Physical de-roleing exercise
 Facilitator leads debrief

Introduction for the Players

Facilitator Note: This should be read directly to the players, or paraphrased thoroughly, so that players know what will be happening as part of this larp. You may find it helpful to remind players, right before the larp begins, of the sequence of events during the larp—after the workshop, or before the break.

Beyond the Wall is a larp set in the space between life and death.

You will each create a character, first through altering your physical expression, then by integrating randomly-chosen emotions, and finally through memories to interpret. At the end, you will have built a sense of who your character was, and then will decide where the character will go next—back into life, upward into eternity, or onward into the mists of forgetfulness.

This is meant to be a quiet, introspective, but emotionally powerful game. You will be confronting the most basic themes of life, love, and remembrance, and sometimes these themes are emotionally overwhelming. Please play thoughtfully.

The larp will play as follows:

First, there will be a workshop for you to explore physical characterization, and to develop a physical expression of your character. There will be exercises on breathing, on body awareness, and then a workshop on how to alter some of the bodily habits we take as default—posture, balance, physical limitations, and movement. By the end, you will have a physical understanding of your character, but nothing more.

The larp proper will begin with a monologue about the place where your characters have found themselves, beyond the wall of death. You will then be free to move around using your newly acquired physical characterization, to physically explore the space, each other, and yourself. At this point, you cannot yet speak, but can express yourself physically.

After some time, the characters' memories will begin to surface, represented by writing on strips of paper given out at random by the facilitator. These are meant as suggestions for free association, not commands; if you deeply dislike a memory you may return it to the facilitator and get another. But do try to allow your character to be formed by what you are given. These memories are not meant to necessarily link together as a

narrative; they may be coherent, or disjointed. They may be profound, or shallow. They mean only what you wish them to mean.

The first memory is of a simple emotion. You can explore this emotion for a few minutes, integrating the physical sensation of that emotion into your character's understanding and physicality, without speaking.

The facilitator will then give out the second round of memories; these are more complicated, social emotions. You will have more time to explore this feeling, and to interact with each other—still, without speech.

After a few minutes, the facilitator will give out the third round of memories. These are more concrete, images and scenes that you can interpret as you will. At this point, your characters will have remembered how to speak, and may talk with one another about their memories, and what those memories might mean.

After a longer period of time, the facilitator will hand out the fourth and final round of memories. Integrate these new memories with your older ones, or not, as you see fit. Characters can speak with each other at length, if they want, or contemplate their memories in silence.

Once you have a good idea of who your characters were, the facilitator will describe the gathering of the mists. You will have a final chance to tell the others who you were, and then you will choose where you will go next: to climb back over the wall, over the sharp and icy stones, back into the realm of life; to rise above the mists towards the eternal stars, where you will remain as you are always; or to go into the gentle mists of the realm of death, where all your burdens will be lifted, and you will have eternal rest. Once the characters are all decided, the facilitator will read the final monologue, which describes the journeys of the souls as they make their way to what lies beyond. This is the end of the larp.

Afterwards, players will be asked about their well being, and the facilitator lead an exercise to de-role—how the players leave their characters behind and return to themselves. Finally, you have a chance to talk about their experiences, either as a group or individually.

Discussing Parameters and Practicing Safety

At this point, players should discuss ways to keep the space safe for all players, including:

Triggers: Do any of the players have known triggers, particularly ones involving (but not limited to) death, personal loss, the grieving process, speculation on the afterlife, physical ability or disability? There are also potential triggers involved in roleplaying out emotions such as grief, anger, aggression, and exclusion, or in player-generated content created as players make sense of the memories they have been given. Potential ways of making play safer include, but are not limited to: discussing topics to avoid ahead of time, removing trigger-related negative emotions from the Memory handouts, and the use of Cut, Brake, and OK. Descriptions and uses follow:

Cut: Play needs to stop, for whatever reason. This should always be a verbal signal. If someone calls "Cut" play will stop, and the facilitator will check in on the person who gave the signal and see what steps need to be taken next, whether that's a moment for the player to recover, an enforcement of the boundaries of safe play, or even someone leaving play, for any reason.

Brake: Play is getting intense, and a player needs to lower the intensity but not actually stop. This can be a verbal signal, but can also be a hand signal (hand out and flat, fingers together, as in "Stop.")

OK: This signal is both question and answer. If a player seems to be in difficulty, the facilitator or another player can signal OK to them (hand forming OK sign on chest, thumb and finger creating a circle with the remaining fingers straight). If the player is doing all right, they can make the signal back; if not, they do nothing, and the facilitator or player who first made the signal can treat it as a Cut. Additionally, a player who may be roleplaying distress (sorrow, fear, anger) can make the OK signal to others to indicate they are not in actual personal distress.

Have players practice these signals if they are not already familiar with them. Cut and Brake in particular are good to use in an exercise defining acceptable physical closeness, as follows.

Touch: Some people are comfortable with being touched in a larp; some people are not, and some people desire it. All of these need to be respected.

All physical touch in *Beyond the Wall* should be positive: while aggressive emotions are present in the larp, they must not be acted out by touching other players, or even miming out physical touch.

Discuss briefly whether the group wishes to allow physical touch in the larp; if so, which people are comfortable giving or receiving touch, and what kind of touch is acceptable (light touch on hands or arms, hugs) and where (arms, shoulders, head, etc.). Physical distance should also be discussed: not all players are comfortable in close quarters.

Physical boundaries can be worked out by having the players partner up with some distance between them, then move toward each other, and one or both of the players will signal (with the hand signal for Brake) when the other person reaches their preferred boundary. Switch up partners until all players have practiced together.

Opening Exercises and Physical Workshops

Facilitator Notes: Players can follow along as you read aloud, if you like, but do allow plenty of time to go through each one. Also, make sure to take breaks between each exercise, even if they are very short.

This larp is designed to acknowledge and work with the natural variations in every person's physical being. Make sure players of different physical abilities are welcome. Each player can alter these exercises to fit their own abilities; please allow players to determine exactly what those are.

Have the players briefly warm up their bodies by swinging their arms and/or jogging lightly, and by stretching out their arms, legs, back, and chest (as possible) before beginning the exercises.

Deep breathing

Stand (or sit straight) with your weight balanced equally, with your hands comfortably by your sides. Close your eyes and breathe quietly for a moment; in through the nose, and out through the mouth. Focus on how the air travels through your nose, your throat, through your chest, and back out again. Do this for a minute or two, gently—do not force your breath or push yourself, just breathe comfortably.

Then, with every inhale, imagine that your breath does not merely go to your chest, but down through your chest, through your belly, and down all the way to your feet. As you exhale, visualize the air returning out, back up through your feet, your belly, your chest, and out through your mouth. Do this for a few minutes—again, gently, and without forcing your breath or pushing too hard.

Physical awareness

Every body is unique and idiosyncratic. None of us are the same: "normal" merely indicates the most common variations, not a perfect standard that individuals deviate from. This exercise is to understand how your own body works, so you can change it for the purposes of creating your character.

Building on the previous exercise, stand (or sit straight) with your weight balanced on both feet and hips, arms comfortably at your sides, eyes closed. Breathe naturally.

Focus your awareness throughout your body, starting with the feet: feel your weight balanced

between your two feet, and between your heels and toes. Do your feet hurt? Do they feel sensitive, tense, strong? Don't attempt to change this, merely notice.

Move your awareness up through your legs: feel your calves, your knees, your thighs. If you are standing, feel how your weight is carried by all of them. Do your knees or ankles feel vulnerable, if they hold you up? Do parts of your legs feel tense, uncomfortable, balanced, strong?

Move your awareness up through your belly, your spine, your chest: feel how these parts move in relation to each other, how they are balanced on your pelvis below you, and how they support your head above, and how your breath affects them, how they shift as you inhale and exhale.

Move your awareness into your shoulders, down through your arms to your hands, and back up to your neck, and finally your head. Do these parts feel balanced? Tense? Stiff?

Now consider your body as a whole. Does tension or discomfort in one part bleed into another? Do you have injuries, old or new? Where do you carry tension: shoulders, neck, back? Do you compensate for a weaker part with one that is strong? Where do you feel powerful, and where do you feel vulnerable? Again, don't try to change this, just be aware.

Finish the exercise by taking a few slow breaths, then open your eyes. Shake out any tensions you may have picked up, swing your arms, get your blood moving again. Stretch gently.

Physical exploration exercises

As every body is unique, you will learn different ways to alter how you stand, sit, walk, and move, and use this new way of carrying yourself to create the seed of a new character. Be aware of your own limitations and vulnerabilities as you do this: the point is to alter your physicality, not hurt yourself or inflame old injuries.

Begin the exercise by standing or sitting in the position that is **most comfortable** for you—not "perfect," not "neutral," just comfortable. As you alter how you hold your body, in these exercises, notice if or how your emotional state changes, and pay attention to how well you can hold this change. You want to be slightly uncomfortable in your character's skin, but only slightly.

Space yourselves around the room so you all have room to move without mishap.

Posture: How do you stand or sit normally? Is your head balanced on top of your neck, or do you slouch forward? Is your chest lifted or sunken?

Alter your posture in different ways, just until it feels slightly unbalanced. How does it feel, emotionally, when you lift your chest, or round your shoulders? Move your head forward and back on your spine, and pay attention to how each one makes you feel. Visualize your head being suspended from above, or your shoulders pushed forward or backwards. Pay attention to how this feels.

Shake out afterwards.

Balance: Do you carry your weight equally on both sides, or are you off balance? Do you shift your weight from side to side frequently, rarely, not at all? Which hand or foot do you use, and for what?

Alter your balance by shifting your weight not just from side to side, but from front to back—onto your toes, and back onto your heels. Use your hips to shift your weight, then your shoulders. How does it feel to be off balance? Move your limbs around leading with your non-dominant side, hand or foot—step forward, or grasp at something. How does that feel to you? How much more do you have to concentrate to use that side first?

Shake out afterwards.

Limitation: Are you naturally flexible or stiff? Where are the limits of how you can move comfortably, and what are your constraints—in flexibility, strength, range of motion. How do you feel if you cannot move some or all of your joints as you usually do? Your limbs? What is it like to constrain your movements to less than what you can normally access? How do you feel if you push slightly beyond your comfort level? Shake out afterwards.

Movement: How do you normally move—are you quick, slow, graceful, jerky, smooth, clumsy? Change up how you move until it feels a little unnatural. If you like, you can start moving slowly around the space, giving enough room for your fellow players. Exaggerate your movements—for example, take steps of a different length, or at a different speed. Wave your arms about. If you like, you can begin to incorporate some of the traits you used in the Posture, Balance, and Limitation sessions. Pay attention to how your body feels as you move about;

you should feel off-kilter, but avoid anything that is painful or pushes your vulnerable areas too much.

Shake everything out at the end of this exercise, stretch, take a few deep breaths, and finally relax back into your most comfortable posture.

Physical Role workshop

In this exercise you will select from the variations you explored in the previous section to create the seed of your character, then practice being and moving in that variation.

Start with your posture, then incorporate variations from all the different categories until you have a way of being in your physical state which feels alien and slightly uncomfortable. Start moving around, as in the previous exercise, but now focus on all the variations you have available. Change things up on the fly, swap out things that are too awkward or take too much thought for you to maintain. Look at your fellow players and see how they have changed; feel free to pick up some aspects of their physicality if they interest you. Find something you feel is interesting, something that affects your mood slightly, for better or worse. This is your character's seed.

Focus on this. Continue to move around the room for a few minutes in this seed, then relax into your own shape again.

Facilitator Note: Give the players a few rounds of getting in to and out of their character seed, then call a short break of five or ten minutes. Ask them to shake off anything they need to, stretch, take a bathroom break or get a drink of water.

When they return, ask them to line up along one wall, a few feet away from it. If the lights are not already dimmed, or the music playing, do so now.

Remind the players of what will happen next: the exploration, the memories handed out at random, and the conclusion. Remind them that their interpretation of memories is their own—not to think too much, associate freely, and return what they can't use for a replacement.

Ask the players to close their eyes and breathe quietly, for a couple of minutes. Ask them to let their bodies relax and their own thoughts go quiet. After a few minutes, then ask them to change their bodies into the seed they have created.

Then the larp will begin.

Larp Begins

Facilitator Note: Remember to watch your players, and intervene (with OK check) if they seem to be in real distress. Also, take timing cues from the players.

Spirits awake

Read aloud:

"You have awakened beyond the wall of death.

Here the sky is dark, and the air is still and cold. Gray mists drift around you, but above, the stars shine bright. They do not move. Beneath you, the ground is bare and icy, and sharp stones press against your feet. Behind you, the wall of death is made from these same stones. You do not remember how you crossed it.

You know you are not meant to be here long, but you do not yet remember where you need to go. Wait. Your answer will come soon. Already, your spirit recalls the body you once were. You feel your own shape, your own way of moving, of being. The remembering has already begun.

As you explore, you realize you are not alone in this cold place. There are other spirits around you. They seem familiar, perhaps, although this may be only that they seem as lost and lonely as you. It is good not to be alone. Perhaps, you might all learn to remember together.

You know one thing most clearly: you need not stay here long. Once you remember who you were, you will know where you need to go next: whether that is up towards the endless, unmoving sky above; or down towards the gray mists of forgetfulness and rest; or back, over the wall made from these sharp and painful stones, back down into the realm of life.

And now begins the time of remembering."

Facilitator Note: If the players have not begun to move about the space by the end of the monologue, ask them to do so now.

Give the players several minutes to move around the space and to confront and react to each other. This can take up to five minutes, although unless you have a hard time constraint, you should always allow the players' progress to determine pacing. More time is generally better than less. Feel free to move around, but stay out of the players' way.

Once the players have thoroughly explored their environment and each other, distribute a Simple Emotion slip to each player. Allow them a moment to decide if they want to work with their particular emotion before you move on to the next.

First memory: Simple emotion

Read aloud:

"A memory has come to you. It is simple, and sharp, and overwhelming. You feel it move through you, coloring all you know. You do not yet know why you feel this; you have no words to describe it. But it is very real."

Facilitator Note: Once again, allow the players to physically explore this emotion for at least a few minutes. If you like, keep track of which player has what kind of emotion, and choose a Complex Emotion slip that is opposite in feel for the next round.

When the all players seem to have played out the emotion they were given, hand out the Complex Emotion slips. These are more nuanced than the first, and many describe relationships. Allow them a moment to decide if they want to work with their particular emotion before you move on to the next.

Second memory: Complex emotion

Read aloud:

"As quickly as it came, another sensation has replaced the first. This one is more complex, harder to understand. You do not know who or what caused this emotion, but it is powerful. You still cannot speak of it, but your spirit expresses it. And you are not alone in this; you can tell your fellow spirits are as consumed as you."

Facilitator Note: Give the players slightly more time with this round, if possible. Gently prompt the players to interact with each other, if they are not. This is a more social round than the first.

Once the players seem have come to some sort of stopping point, hand each one a slip from the Remembered Moment pile.

Third memory: Remembered moment

Read aloud:

"And now, you begin to remember fragments of the life you lived. A moment in time, important or trivial. It is a message from your past, but you do not yet know what it means. But along with it, you have remembered how to speak—how to describe, to analyze, to share. What have you remembered? What does it mean?" **Facilitator Note:** At this point, the players can speak, so it will be easier to monitor how the scene is going. Let them explore their memories with each other, but don't let this round run too long, as they will have another memory that will enrich or contradict the first.

Once the players have each had a chance to speak, hand them each another Remembered Moment to work from.

Fourth memory: Remembered moment

Read aloud:

"Other memories are returning to you, but slowly. One moment has overwhelmed you. What does it mean to you? Is it a powerful moment, or a small one? Why do you remember this one moment so clearly?

You are beginning to feel the shape of the person you once were, much as you feel the shape of the body you once were. The shape of your whole life, the pattern that was you, is re-emerging. And you begin to understand what is left of you."

Facilitator Note: This should be a reasonably long round, as the players have all of the pieces with which to finish their character, and they will need time to integrate them.

When they seem to be close to a resolution, proceed to the final round.

Mists gather

Read aloud:

"As your own self is remembered, you see the mists begin to gather close. You know that you may soon depart, that you were never required to stay here long.

One last time, gather with your companions and speak of who you were. Reveal yourself, and decide where you will go next:

Will you rise to the unmoving stars above, and remain as you are, eternal and unchanging?

Will you go into the mists of this place, where all your burdens will be lifted, and you will find rest?

Or will you climb back over the wall, over the sharp and ruthless stones of the wall of death, and return to the realm of life, to journey there anew?

Tell the others: who you are, and where you will go."

Facilitator Note: This is the final round, so let the scene play out as long as necessary, time constraints permitting.

When each character has chosen their destination, read the conclusion.

Spirits depart

Read aloud:

"As you have chosen, you each move on.

Those who rise to the stars, you feel the earth move away below you. As you do, all of your life becomes clear; every moment, every breath, every memory, is returned to you, never to be taken again. The stars grow brighter as you rise, and like them, you begin to shine.

Those who seek rest, you move forward into the gray mists. They gather about you, soft and welcoming. You feel your sorrows lightened as you go, your burdens taken from you, your spirit given ease. And the mists surround you, and bring you in, and you become mist, and you are gone, at last at peace.

Those who seek return, be strong, for this way is hardest, and full of sorrows. The stones of the wall are sharp, and cut you as you climb. And it is a long climb. The memories you so recently regained begin to slip from you, again, until you do not remember where you are, or why you are here, or how it is you can go on in such pain. But you do go on.

As you reach the top of the wall, you look ahead, over to the realm of life. The sun is rising there, and as its rays touch you, you cross over once again, light and joyous as a breath of wind, as a ray of light, as a memory, back into the living world.

And thus ends your time beyond the wall."

Facilitator Note: Let the players come back naturally from the last scene. Ask them to breathe a moment, shake off their character physically, and then take a few deep breaths, or stretch. Check your players for any signs of lingering emotional distress; ask them if they are all feeling all right.

Then call a break for a few minutes before you begin the debrief.

De-role and Debrief

Check in with your players again after the break. Is anyone distressed or angry? Do they need a tissue, a drink of water, an extra minute?

Ask the players to gather in a circle, either standing or sitting as they prefer. Have them close their eyes, take a deep breath or two, and think about their character: how their character moved, and felt. Tell them to continue breathing easily, then visualize their character leaving them physically, dissolving or rising off of their bodies. If their character had a particular posture, have them shake out of it; if the character had a limitation or constraint on their movement, have the players stretch those parts. Basically, let them physically release the character they had created, and return to their own comfortable way of moving and being. This should take a few minutes.

While they are physically moving their character out, ask them to visualize their character leaving, going to the destination they had chosen. All the joys, sorrows, frustrations, burdens of the character go with them, or are released, leaving nothing left but the player, in the player's own sense of physical and emotional self.

Once the players feel they have returned to themselves, you can begin to ask questions. This can be done either as a full group, or in pairs; ask your players which they would prefer.

Here are some suggestions of questions to discuss, choose which you feel are appropriate. Or, create your own.

What about your character was like you, and what was not? What would you want to take from your character, and keep?

How did the physical transformations change how you, as the player, were feeling during the workshop? During the game? How did it feel to let that physical aspect go?

How does your body feel now?

What kind of insight did your character have, or lack? Do you feel you share that insight, or found it?

Are you happy with the decision your character made? Why or why not?

Did this larp make you feel differently about your physical capabilities? The physical capabilities of others? Do you feel your own personality is shaped by your own physical state, or not?

Are there memories you have as a still-living person that have become touchstones for you? What senses do they engage? Do you reflect on them, or remember them often? How do you use them to make sense of your life?

Finally, check in again with your players before you let the group loose. If players are willing, check in with them a few days afterwards, and encourage them to talk with each other about their experiences.

Single-Person Play

For a single person, this larp becomes even more quiet and introverted—a personal character development, rather than a social construction that is developed in part by one's peers. To play alone, you will need to set up in a quiet room with some room to move around, and print out the entire larp. Atmospheric music is particularly helpful here.

To prepare, have the "Opening Exercises and Physical Workshops" and "Larp Begins" pages handy someplace where they are easy to read. Cross out the third paragraph of the Beginning Monologue. Print out the Handouts, cut them apart, then select unseen, at random, one Simple Emotion, one Complex Emotion, and two Remembered Moments. Put them where you can pick them up easily, but don't read them yet.

Run through the exercises and workshops as written. Once you have a sense of your character as a physical being, read the Opening Monologue (all but the crossed-out paragraph).

As you feel you gain insight into your character, read each of the four memory slips at intervals, and incorporate them into your character.

Consider these questions as you play:

Who is this person, and who do they become as their memories return to them?

How does your character's physicality change, with each new revelation?

What is it like to be alone, to have no one to validate who you are, and how you wish to be seen?

How do you decide your fate, when there are no other people to help you, to ask or answer questions? What do you look for, to guide you?

Contemplate the three possible destinations:

To rise to the stars, and remain always as you are now, fixed and unchanging

To seek rest in the gray mists, given true peace, beyond the trials of the living

To return to the cycle of life in all its forms; to lose what you have, but be given new things in return; to risk pain in the hope of joy

Which will your character choose?

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J Li's workshop, "How to Write a Larp in 4 hours," Big Bad Con 2015

Handouts

Print out these two pages, cut the items apart, and keep them in separate piles.

Simple Emotions

Fear	Joy	Love	Anger Loneliness	
Sorrow	Hopefulness	Aggression		
Confusion	Empathy	Anticipation	Frustration	

Complex Emotions

Pride, with Regret or Loss	Defeat, Exhaustion	Anger over something taken from you	Desire to protect someone Desire to be seen, paid attention to	
Mischief, to play or provoke	Shame with Fear	Fear that someone will hurt you		
Desire to care for someone	Yearning for something lost	Worry that someone was hurt	Fear of exclusion or rejection	

Remembered Moments

The feel of sunlight on your hands and face.

Leaves flickering and shimmering in the wind.

The smell of a baby's head.

Someone holds your hand, and speaks to you.

A voice, calling for you, from somewhere far away.

The sound of people cheering.

A bright jolt of terrible pain.

The fur of a friendly animal under your fingers.

The sudden sound of an alarm.

The salt taste of tears, and a tightness in your throat.

Many people, speaking, afraid.

The pull of water around you.

The face of a loved one, turning away.

The sharp shock of loss, then a long and fading grief.

Waking up at night, alone.

Weariness in your arms, your legs, your back.

Searching for something, or someone, you cannot yet name.

An unexpected kiss.

Freezing silence hurts your teeth.

The pounding of your heart and the dribble of sweat down your neck.

Someone is waiting for you.

Children yelling, in joy.

BLESSED BE THE HOST OF THE KING OF HEAVEN!

BY TAYLER STOKES

Blessed Be the Host of the King of Heaven! is a freeform larp that follows the aftermath in Heaven after Lucifer's fall. All players take the role of Angels who will decide what happens what is to be done through mechanics that limit how the Angels may discuss the situation at hand.





Blesses Be

the Bost of the Ring

of Beaven!

A freeform game about stature and voice for three to seven players



by TaylerStokes

Golden Cobra Challenge October 2015, Portland OR Graphics & Layout by Jay Sylvano





Introduction



and has been banished from Heaven. In this hour a Choir

no helpless mortals hear his wicked words Heaven so that none may follow Lucifer's Lucifer loved mortals more than he loved those who also commit such unthinkable will we address and dispel those doubts? acts? Lucifer has sown doubt among the and lies? How will we revise the laws of God, how will we ensure that no others will make such a blasphemous mistake? How will we keep Lucifer silent so that of Angels gathers to decide now Heaven will handle the aftermath ranks of Heaven and Earth alike, how betrayal of God! What will happen to of Lucifer's Fall. Lucifer has acted in shameful path? Blessed be the Host of the King of Heaven! are more glorious, possess greater wisdom, how Heaven will proceed in the aftermath is a brief freeform game for three to seven players. Players will each take the role of of Lucifer's Fall. However, some Angels an Angel in the Choir, and will discuss

Also note that play will follow incomplete processes. Sometimes it will just be up to of Heaven, and their voices carry farther. you to navigate these moments without and garner greater favor from the King guidance. This is intentional.

Angels and Heaven are used more for their weight as familiar and dominant cultural examine this game and the resulting play and judgement that they embody. Please of a stratified community rather than as symbols, and for the purity, authority, through those concepts in the context Though this game borrows heavily on is not really about any religious issue. Christian imagery and cosmology, it theological commentary.

Requirements

- A roll of white party streamers
- Some paperclips or pins
 - A few black sharpies
- A red inkpad
- A large enough space for your party
 - Hand soap and a place to wash up afterwards
- different levels of elevation, chairs for Furniture that allows for standing at sitting, etc.
- confined light source (preferably a shaft A spotlight or similarly bright but of sunlight through a window)
 - Two to three hours

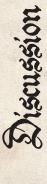
and interact with an interesting landscape. Place somewhat separated from other furniture. Place Set up the light first in an area of the play space the sharpies, clips or pins, and the streamers on a central table. Turn the light off (if applicable) ight so that players must kneel to get to it. Set the ink pad on the ground in the center of the up furniture'so that Angels may move around precious to them as they will be handling ink to wear comfortable clothing that is not too before the players assemble. Advise players





Briefing

Varmups





is the facilitator. The Facilitator hoever is presenting this game is responsible for leading

the game, despite their in game position describing and upholding the rules of the briefing and debriefing, as well as among the other Angels. Before play, imagine the play space and set it up accordingly; light, props and all.

their Angels (also led by the facilitator), the Game Processes until conditions for Preparation in which players will adopt After the Briefing, play proceeds to the followed by the Proceedings (led by an Debriefing (led by the facilitator) after Angel player). Play then freely follows Dispersal are met, which leads to the which the game is over.

These are short group activities. Each should only take a couple of minutes.

SING A CHORD

Once you find it, slowly get quieter until it harmony between the two of you. Repeat Each player softly sings a pitch with an "Ah" sound. Focus on another player's voice; make eye contact find a pleasing for other players. Try to get the whole group to produce a consonant chord. fades to silence.

MIMICRY

another player's body movements. Imitate Walk around the room. As you do, copy players at least once. Explore the entire them for a while, and then move on to another player. Imitate all of the other space of the room.

Queues, a conversation tool that may help Lead a discussion based on these prompts. prompt. See the end of the text for Hand your group mediate this discussion. Not everybody has to answer every

- · Which communities that you belong to are the most important to you?
- Have you ever been concerned for the health of those communities?
- What are you willing to do to maintain the health of those communities?
 - What level of responsibility do you feel for those communities?

Same Aresentation

answer questions as they arise. Once complete, Discord, Banishment, and Dispersal sections continue to Safety and Support, Preparation, around as you read through the sections and with the group. Take turns passing the text Review the game mechanics In the Class, and finally Proceedings.





Same Arocesses

Class

determined by their Class. Class may change during play. Class IV is the highest, most glorious Class, while Class I is the lowest and most humble.

• Class I: May only voice agreement or support.

Class II: May also ask questions.

• Class III: May also accuse or criticize. • Class IV: May also defend or justify. Each Angel must position themselves beneath those with a higher Class. Class IV Angels should stand as tall and proud as possible, possibly climbing atop an object or platform, and speak with conviction. Each lesser Class must fit beneath each Class above them; a Class III might stand normally, while a Class II sits in a chair, and a Class I takes to the floor. If adjusting one's height is not a viable or preferable option, show your deference or superiority through other means.

Favor

The King of Heaven's presence is known by a brilliant light. **Those who kneel** in the Light of God receive His favor. However, only one Angel may bask in the Light of God at a time.

An Angel's true character is revealed in the Light of God. An Angel who spends too little time in God's presence may be swayed by Lucifer already, and cannot be trusted. An Angel who spends too much time in the presence of God may be arrogant, vain, or seeking their own glory, and are therefore capable of the same sin as Lucifer himself. Watch the other Angels, take note of their character, and factor this into your decisions and interactions.

Discord

The Angels are in discord whenever they disagree about something. When the Angels are in discord their Class may shift.

Discord is often consciously initiated by an Angel, usually by challenging something another Angel has said.

value of supporting Classes on each side of support or agree with and touch fingertips still linger, but the Choir's course of action of an argument were comprised of Classes the argument; the statement of whomever respectively, resolving the discord in favor IV and II, those values sum to five and six received the strongest support is accepted of the second group). Disagreements may discord has been resolved. Sum the total as the truth for Heaven (thus, if one side I, I, and III and the other side of Classes All Angels flock toward the Angel they in their way according to their chosen nature and remain touching until the has been decided





Resolving Discord

A tie represents an impasse; how the Choir will handle an impasse is up to them to determine.

Note that only Class III and IV have a clear means of initiating a discord. Class II may initiate in more subtle ways, but at Class I no initiation is possible at all.

The victorious Angel goes to to the Light of God and receives the favor of the King of Heaven by pressing a finger into the inkpad and blotting out a part of the Fallen's sash, covering as much area as possible and using a new finger each time. Cast Lucifer's sash to the ground once you are finished.

The victorious Angel then increases their Class by folding and pinning their sash to reveal the next Class, to a maximum of Class IV. They now benefit from new speaking privileges.

The disgraced Angel failed to sway the Choir reduces their Class by folding and pinning their sash to display their new lowered Class, to a minimum of Class

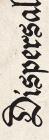
I. They now have greater restraints while speaking.

Since Angles cannot initiate discord at Class I, they have a different means of gaining Class. A Class I Angel gains Class by supporting the victorious Angel and by joining them in blotting out a portion of the Fallen's text following the same guidelines. To gain Class from that humble position an Angel must enthusiastically participate in 'instice'.











Class IV Angel may move to expel an Angel of lesser Class from Heaven. This is handled like any other argument.

of Lucifer's actions and is victorious when

resolving the resulting discord, if any.

path for Heaven is clear in the aftermath highest Class Angel announces that the

> disgrace. They may no longer speak for a station below the other Angels, face averted, hands covering their face in If the Class IV is victorious then the other Angel is now Fallen and takes the duration of play.

A Class IV Angel must be reduced in Class before they can be banished by another Class IV Angel.

Dispersal

The Choir disperses once two Angels

have also been banished, or when the





Support and Safety



unfamiliar with each other. Though this game Signals, is included at the end of this text. acilitator, present support tools as navigating personal boundaries, Support does not deliberately explore troubling play group is composed of people who are needed for your play group, but subject matter, there is no telling what air on the side of caution if the may come up in play. A technique for

do not believe the our person or our feelings accept each other and our feelings, or if we of our experiences. Our ability to see each will be accepted by the group, then this is other as complete people trumps all other be vulnerable, and accept however we feel compassion, and acceptance. We agree to understand that each of us are a product We approach play from a place of trust, not a game that we should play together. considerations. If we are not willing to during play to be valid and whole. We

happening in the game, or about how the about how the game works, about what's At any time a player may ask questions players are feeling.

for any reason. Nobody needs permission At any time a player may ask for a break, from anybody else.

comfortable doing this, call for a break to or call for the game to end. If you aren't At any time a player may leave the game speak with the facilitator and have them handle the situation.

express, but we are going to release those judgements so that we can engage with player's actions in game, their use of these procedures, or about what they We may have judgments about a what is happening right now





Vreparation

Facilitator, guide the players through this process. Take your turns as you are moved to do so, but let the other players have a chance to answer first.

Angel. Together the Angels form the Choir. Their voices are used to guide Heaven to righteousness. Together they must discuss the banishment of Lucifer, an Angel cast down from Heaven by the will of God, and the implications this banishment has for the remainder of the Heavenly Host and for Heaven itself.

Each Angel defines their nature through their body language and by how they hold their arms. Each Angel is unique and has a different nature. Once this choice is made, the Angels must keep their arms in a position that conveys this nature at all times. Angels to not have to hold a fixed position for the entire game; however the positions they do adopt must always convey their nature. Possible gestures include praise, warning, command, offering, welcoming, acceptance, begging, beckoning, sorrow, and celebration.

Select a name as well, or create a name in the style of other Angelic names. Angels are genderless and androgynous, though some mortals perceive Angels to have a clear gender. Possible names include Barbelo, Gabriel, Michael, Anaita, Raphael, Uriel, Charmeine, Raguel, Remiel, Saraqael, Isda, Chamuel, Dina, Jophiel, Ardouisur, Zadkiel, Haniel, Simiel, Eloa, Oriphiel, Cecitiel, Nefta, Oriel, Ananiel, Armaita, Marmoniel, Seket.

Each Angel, having selected a unique nature, announces their name and declares their devotion to the glory of Heaven, and explains how their nature will serve the will of God. Speak with great presence and authority. Should an Angel claim your chosen name or nature before you claim it for yourself, you must claim a different name or nature.

Once you have your name, take the roll of party streamers and make yourself a sash. Make it long enough to be loose. Write your name in your finest script upon the sash, as well as the numbers I, II, III, and IV, all with

an inch or two in between. Take a paperclip or pin as well.

The first Angels to to have spoken will have the highest class, and the last the lowest class, as determined by the number of Angels currently gathered. Class determines how an Angel may use their voice. Fold your sash and use the clip or pin to hold it so that it shows your Class. Make sure that the lowest number showing is your given Class.

The final Angel to take a sash will make one for Lucifer as well, without numbers for Class, and casts it to the ground.

Class Set	III, II, I	т, п, п, г	Ш, П, П, І	Ш, Ш, П, П, I, I	Ш, Ш, П, П, ІІ, І
Angels	3	4	5	9	4





A roceedings

Any Class III Angel, turn on the Light of God (if applicable) and stand in it, hold up Lucifer's Sash, and guide the Choir through the following instructions.

will we revise the laws of Heaven so that none Heaven will handle the aftermath of Lucifer's how will we address and dispel those doubts? mortals hear his wicked words and lies? How make such a blasphemous mistake? How will what will happen to those who also do such among the ranks of Heaven and Earth alike, God, how will we ensure that no others will unthinkable things? Lucifer has sown doubt Lucifer loved mortals more than he loved Fall. Lucifer has acted in betrayal of God, Lucifer has lost the favor of God and has we keep Lucifer silent so that no helpless a Choir of Angels gathers to decide how been banished from Heaven. This hour may follow in Lucifer's shameful path?

The Heavenly Host is in strife. It is absurd that God or others within the Heavenly Host are at fault as Lucifer has claimed, for God is benevolent and all knowing. A consensus

must be reached for Heaven to be peaceful once again.

Each Angel answers by writing on Lucifer's sash:

What were Lucifer's doubts?

Explain as you write, but summarize your answers in only a couple of words. Then, contemplate privately: you have absolute faith in the Heavenly Host and in God; how are Lucifer and his sympathizers among the Heavenly Host and the mortals mistaken?

Angels contemplate privately:

You have absolute faith in the Heavenly Host and in God; contemplate for now how Lucifer is mistaken and how they are mistaken.

Each Angel answers by writing on Lucifer's sash:

What did Lucifer do?

Angels contemplate privately:

Explain as you write, but summarize your answers in only a couple of words. Then,

contemplate privately: How disgraceful were Lucifer's actions? Which laws or commandments did they break? How has this brought shame into Heaven itself?

Each Angel answers by writing on Lucifer's

What would happen if other members of the Heavenly Host thought and acted this way?

Angels contemplate privately:

What must be done to keep Heaven pure?
Who else must be cast away for the sake of
Heaven? What message or standards must we
set for the future of Heaven? What fears do
you now possess on account of these events?

These questions and their answers are what the Choir has assembled to discuss. May we find peace and harmony once more!

Cast Lucifer's sash to the ground. Play officially begins. Play ends once the Choir has dispersed, after which the players proceed to the debriefing.





Debriefing

following these steps. It's alright if you deviate from these prompts.

Not everybody has to answer every prompt. See the end of the text for Hand Queues, a conversation tool that may help your group mediate this discussion.

- Turn off the Light of God, if applicable.
 "Tear up your sashes and leave them with Lucifer's sash."
- "Take a break and wash your hands."
- Reconvene in a different area. Everybody sits on the floor in a circle.
- · "Thank you all for playing."
- "We are going to refer to the Angels themselves instead of the players who portrayed them."
- "Think about your Angel. What were they most proud of?"
- "What was the greatest injustice?"
- "What did the ink mean?"
- "For those of you that spend most of the

game in lower Classes, how was your.
Angel motivated by needing to be accepted by other Angels? How did that affect your Angel's opinions?"

- "For those of you that spent most of the time in higher Classes, in what ways was your Angel a hypocrite?"
 - "How was your Angel's voice and ability to be heard impacted by the behavior of the other Angels?"
 - "What was it like being scrutinized and judged all the time?"
- "What of Lucifer?"
- "What of Heaven? What was Heaven to your Angel?"
- "What of God, from what you could see?"
- "Have you seen status and voice disparity in your own communities? How does that impact a new member's inclusion into or exclusion from the group? How do the opinions of well established community members impact the practical inclusivity of the community?"

"Reflect for a moment on what isn't being talked about in your communities."

 "As you exit play, reflect on infallibility, who is treated as such, and what that means. Good luck out there." Clean up game materials. Stay available in case anybody wants to talk. Go socialize, if possible.



Design Atotes

Heaven! takes its name from the Article of the Ning of the Heaven! takes its name from the attributed to Ivan's confessor, Andrew. This icon depicts Ivan the Terrible leading an army away from a burning city following the lead of the archangel

And also because I am irrationally fond of aware of what's going on. It's easy to see the Angels and Heaven that unified these as well. In the end it was the symbols of blasphemous, and many of the soldiers commentary on institutional bullying, how people motivated by institutional criticism of both Ivan and Michael are who conquered the city lost their lives pressures are both participants in and depicted therein seemed apt to me, as concepts with the design of this game. victims of such bullying. The crusade This game originally started out as a and how people can get drawn into participating in that without being

apocalyptic angel woodcuts.

I hope players consider how voice and stature shape their communities. It is very easy for critical voices to be silenced in many ways. Please listen, please question, and please discard notions of infallibility. Pay attention to whom your communities are accessible to, and who is most likely to be driven away, for their voices will never be heard.

On a more practical note, there are some deliberate "blank spots" in this game's design. In particular, handling ties when resolving discord and who speaks first when announcing their name and seizing their Class. These are intended to be socially unclear and contentious moments with no sanctioned answer or process. Judgement for spending too much or too little time in God's Light is the same way. Let these voids be difficult and unclear; discuss within the limitations of your voices.

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Games to Gather and the Game Garden

Contact & Feedback

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SUPPORT SIGNALS

A non-verbal communication tool for support, comfort and safety during play, developed by Jay Sylvano in collaboration with Tayler Stokes.

traffic signal, leaving a couple of inches between each one. Participants reach over and tap a color while making eye-contact to signal to other All participants take three colored stickers - red, yellow, and green - and wear them on a strip of masking tape near their shoulders just like a players what they would like them to do. Wear the stickers in order of red, yellow, green from top to bottom*.

be more impactful than it is right now. Tap green after you do something dramatic to signal you are still playing and nothing is wrong. But please, Tapping green is a request to push farther into what is happening in the scene. Tap green because you think that this scene has the potential to use green to go deeper into the subject matter and not simply for going more dramatic or over the top. Green can also be used to indicate you are okay with where things are going

Tapping yellow signals that things are good right where they are, but require caution; be careful not to escalate but don't shy away either. Tap yellow when you are getting what you want but require the care and attention of the other players.

Tapping red signals that you don't want to go there. Tap red when you want navigate away from a situation.

Flicker between two colors to ask another player if we are good where we are, or if they want more (yellow-green) or less (yellow-red). Make eye-contact until they clarify by tapping the color that tells you what they need Not tapping a color - which is going to be most of the time - signals that everything is okay right now. Remember that even though something was okay before doesn't mean it's always going to be okay, so make use of other signals as people's needs change.

hold when you think something might be dangerous, risky, or otherwise unsafe. Once an understanding had been reached release the hold by loudly and clearly. Explain how we are mis-communicating and let the other players know what you need. While holding you can ask for just If signals just aren't working and more communication is needed, hold the game by clasping your hands in front of you and saying "Hold!" about anything. If you don't feel comfortable talking or making requests in front of a group, ask for a break and speak with a facilitator. Use acknowledging that you are ready to continue and unclasping your hands. If an understanding cannot be reached, proceed to the debrief. It is important that the stickers be placed in the correct order to accommodate colorblind individuals. As the order of red, yellow, green from top to bottom is the universal standard or traffic lights, it is the most easily identifiable order for people who are red-green colorblind

HAND QUEUES

A conversation tool by Tayler Stokes

Hand Queues are an attempt to equalize conversations by asking participants to observe nonverbal turn taking signals. The goal is to allow a more diverse range of voices to be heard in group conversations, discussions, and games.

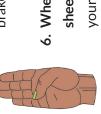


- usual, until somebody holds up a finger. As long as somebody is holding up a finger we are observing 1. Only use Hand Queues if it is necessary to be heard in a timely fashion. We are just talking, like Hand Queues
- are saying. If there are already fingers up, hold up the next highest number of fingers. The number of fingers you are holding up indicates your place in line. Your place in line is only good for one topic. If 2. Hold up a finger and you will speak when whoever is currently speaking is finished with what they you have more things you want to say, use your other hand to take an additional place in line.









sheet. While it's great to stay organized, the real value of taking notes is so you can give the speakers 6. When you think of something you want to raise with the group make a note on the back of this your full attention instead of having to hold all of those thoughts in your head.

- Hand Queues work best in groups of three to seven.
 - Eye contact is key.
- Make use of other nonverbal gestures, like approving nods, thumbs-up, or snaps.
- If somebody else says what you were going to say, take your turn anyway and voice your agreement.
- Take lots of notes.
- Hand Queues are useful during many discussions and when playing verbal tabletop
- Remember, if no fingers are up then we are just talking.

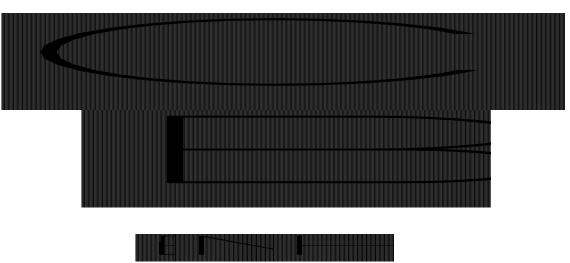
GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

CELESTIAL BODIES

BY NICOLAS HORNYAK

Celestial Bodies is an abstract freeform larp about the relationships between astronomical objects sucheck as stars, planets, and more--all of which can never touch, lest they face destruction. Players explore individual metaphors in an extended dance for 30-60 minutes as they do so, in a collaborative intimate environment for up to four players.







"This is what we call love. When you are loved, you can do anything in creation. When you are loved, there's no need at all to understand what's happening, because everything happens within you."

- Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist

Celestial Bodies is a game about intimate relationships, both platonic and romantic, and inevitable loss, set against the context of astronomical objects and structures, i.e. the titular celestial bodies of the heavens. It is a freeform larp designed for the 2015 Golden Cobra Challenge.

Over the course of thirty minutes to an hour of play, up to four players will roleplay various astronomical objects, ranging from comets and asteroids to nebulas and galaxies, although nobody will quite be on the same scale. Like all massive things with gravity, each player will either move in orbit or pause in place to offer a point around which to orbit. It is in these subtle shifts that everybody will gradually change roles, adjusting what they are and who they know in an extended motion of dance.



Thank you to the judges and curators of this year's Golden Cobra Challenge for continuing a great thing. I would've hated to see it happen only once.

Additional thanks go out to my family and friends, all of whom have encouraged and supported my strange love for gaming and game design.

Cover Illustration: A piece I put together. The original images are "Silhouette Woman And Man" by George Hodan, and images of the Pillars of Creation (left silhouette) and the Carina Nebula (right silhoulette) published by NASA. All three images exist within the public domain.

Design: Nicolas Hornyak, October 2015



Celestial Bodies is a game that is highly romantic in nature. However, romance is a word that has not only encompassed humanity's consensual rituals of courtship, but the appeal of what is both heroic and idealized. As a result, this game plays around with these themes as they apply to freeform larp. It offers a residual peace in play, but an impactful motion to the soul with every action you commit to. All is a metaphor, even if the metaphor goes unshared.

During the game, a series of ambient pieces will be heard in the play pace. All of these sounds are normally associated with the cosmos and inner peace, and used to offer a series of gentle movements to the overall game, similar to how a composer might put together several pieces and call each one a movement of the symphony. I encourage you to meditate through your motions, and invite other players to join you in the cosmos you craft.



"[Ganymede] was the loveliest born of the race of mortals, and therefore the gods caught him away to themselves, to be Zeus' wine-pourer, for the sake of his beauty, so he might be among the immortals."

- Homer, Iliad, Book XX, lines 233-235

To run a game of Celestial Bodies, you will need the following supplies:

- A 30-60 minute playlist of ambient music, suited to the thought of space and mediations.
- Speakers through which you can play the music.
- A play space you can adjust the lighting in.

As a recommendation, Stellardrone is an artist on Bandcamp known for his ambient tracks and albums, and offers them on a pay-what-you-want basis. Consider downloading his albums *Light Years* and *Invent the Universe*, with which you can assemble a custom playlist. Keep in mind that harsher sounds may jerk players out of the moment, but also spur them to new drama in their roleplay as astronomical objects.

You can find Stellardrone's albums here: https://stellardrone.bandcamp.com/

You may also choose to utilize an ambient track on Youtube, which can be anywhere from thirty to sixty minutes long. However, you should only do this if your internet connection is stable, as there is nothing more jarring than for the music to cut out in the middle of an important moment.

Prep your playlist before everyone meets for game. Additionally, clear your play space of chairs and tables. Set up a few in separate corners of the room in case a player needs to sit and rest during the motions of game.

Once you have assembled your players, invite them all to sit in a circle together on the floor of your play space. Encourage them to lie down and relax if they want to. Reinforce that they are currently in a safe space.

Facilitate this by discussing safety techniques. Inform them that if they need an action to ease up for any reason, they can say "Brake" to communicate this, and all players involved should back off. The Narrator (that's you) will be over to check on them.

Also inform them that if they need all play to stop for safety concerns or their mental health and well-being, they can say "Cut" and everybody must stop playing. This is not the word to use if you need to leave for something or go to the bathroom. You can do so without interrupting everybody's game.

Finally, ask everybody if they're clear on all safety terms. Clarify any misunderstandings, discuss any concerns, and then tell them that they will all spend half-an-hour or so workshopping before the larp. After that, you will tell them the story of Ganymede.

This is the easiest workshop, because you can quite literally read this story off the page. However, it is very important, because not only does this help a baseline metaphor for the larp, but it encourages those who share the same gender to partake in a communal sense of intimacy and romance with each other. The next two workshops will help along the comfort levels behind doing so, but for now, read the following out loud:

"Once, long ago, in the Heroic Age of ancient Greece, back when legends became gods, and gods transcended myth to become faith, there was a kingdom, far to the east, that was called Phrygia. And in Phrygia, a day's march off from the famous city of Troy, there was a mountain that they called Mount Ida.

"At the foot of this mountain, there flocked a herd of sheep, and these animals were fortunate and blessed, for they were tended to by a young man known as Ganymede. And though no living person possessed the sight to see it yet, Ganymede was the most beautiful of mortals.

"Now, back in those days, a god was not necessarily all-knowing. They had other gods to contend with in many matters, and humans seemed to them such whimsy creatures to entrance. Perhaps this was why, when his former cupbearer departed Mount Olympus to marry the greatest of heroes, the king of the gods, Zeus, set out to find a new one, and to do so, he took on the form of a great eagle and flew east.

"But alas, the body of an eagle must feed and drink, and one day, he descended upon the foot of Mount Ida, near where Ganymede lay, resting at high noon from the work of that long morning. As he feasted upon the prey he just caught, the eagle Zeus craved water, but not knowing where to find it on Mount Ida, approached the young man.

"Now, Ganymede had never been this close to an eagle, much less an eagle of this size. But he'd grown up tending to animals all his life, and so he recognized the thirst in Zeus' eyes. From his canteen, he poured water into a bowl he carried with him and offered it to the great bird as he approached.

"And Zeus, he drank from the bowl, saw the beauty which offered it to him, and snatched up Ganymede in his talons, carrying the young man all the way back to Mount Olympus. And it was there that the young man finally saw the god he had served, and when Zeus proclaimed him to be his new cup-bearer, he accepted with a smile. That smile was so beautiful and so entrancing that Zeus couldn't imagine the rest of existence without it, and so granted Ganymede immortality and eternal youth on the spot.

"Now, in the great scheme of the universe, gods do not merely die or go out of fashion. They ascend, in new ways and to new heights. As surely as faith turns to myth in time, Zeus became Jupiter, and became myth all the same. But on the wish of one final breath, he rose into the skies, taking with him the gods and the immortals, along with the legends and the tales.

"There, he joined with the largest planet near ours, and Ganymede joined him as his largest moon. And as eagle and mortal, their reflections were cast into the stars as constellations—as Aquila and Aquarius. And so they remain, to this day, until the fate of the cosmos will do them part."



"Never regret thy fall,
O Icarus of the fearless flight
For the greatest tragedy of them all
Is never to feel the burning light."

- Oscar Wilde

In Nordic larp, there have been various instances where larpers have desired to convey sexual activity without partaking in actual sexual activity, ranging from something as small as a kiss to something as significant as intercourse. However, a very important technique has arisen to help fill this niche, known as Ars Amandi. In Ars Amandi, you agree on safe zones upon the arms and shoulders with which to convey different forms of intimacy. This can be done with something as simple as a brush or as complicated as a grab, and everything in between.

If you're curious, you can learn more here, although it's not required to play this larp: http://www.ars-amandi.se/resources/the-ars-amandi-method/

Ars Solis is similar, but only in purpose. In *Celestial Bodies*, it is used to convey intimacy among players who are not allowed to touch in such ways. This is because, for the most part, the players will be roleplaying giant, astronomical bodies, not the gods they're traditionally named after. Most impacts on Earth, for example, have not transpired so well, and those were mostly meteorites.

To begin this workshop, invite everyone in the circle to take their hand and spread their fingers. Face the palm up towards the face. Then, with the middle finger, trace the center line of your face, from the forehead to the chin, without actually touching your face.

This is not the easiest maneuver. Players might accidentally touch their nose or their chin as they practice this. Try not to linger on it for more than a couple minutes. This is only to emphasize that although they cannot touch, they can still curve their fingers as though they did.

After this, demonstrate how the arms are a sliding scale for this technique. Explain how, in the cosmos, tracing somebodies fingers without touching them is kind of like a soothing gesture of companionship. Show how much more intimacy is involved as you move up your own arm, always tracing but never touching. Ask everyone to try it with a partner a few times, just to get a feel for it.

Discuss how comfortable everyone is with the technique. Due to the nature of Ars Solis, players should clarify their permissions before game, ala how far up the arm they will permit.

If you're playing with a group of close friends, you might wish to expand the range of Ars Solis to areas such as the back or torso. But the default mode of this technique is restricted to the arms, and you shouldn't exceed these limits without the group's permission as a whole.

Finally, present the only exception to this mechanic. Take a finger on each hand and touch their tips together. This is what represents a stable orbit of communion, and you should tell the players that. But you should also tell them that this is a mode of touch, and so it's the most intimate thing you can partake in. The rest of Ars Solis is non-touch and no speaking is allowed during the game itself.

"They meet. And ere they've seen each other's face They fall into each other's arms, upon The Broadway cable car—and this is Fate!"

- Carolyn Wells, "Fate"

This workshop is centered on one mechanic in particular, but is designed to segue into play by easing everybody into the main motions of the game as well.

First, if everyone isn't standing already, invite them to stand up with you. Tell them the name of this technique, and ask for a volunteer to help demonstrate it. Tell your volunteer that you are going to place your hand on their back, have them face away from you, and place your open hand on their back, between their shoulder blades. Tell everyone that when they feel this, they should be inspired to move in or out of the play space in the center of the room.

Reinforce that you'll probably only use this technique a few times, and ask if anyone is uncomfortable with it. If they are, don't linger on it, just keep in mind that you shouldn't place your hand on their back during play.

Now everyone is going to use this in practice. Tell everyone that when the music starts is when the larp is officially underway, but for now, everyone is going to practice going into orbit around you. Send everybody to opposite corners of the room. Point them out one at a time, asking them to circle the spot you're standing in. As they do so, tell them to 'mind their toes' and 'step lightly' as though they're dancing through space, not walking around a room.

When everybody is in orbit, tell them to keep circling as you leave your spot. One at a time, place your hand on every player's back (unless they've requested that you don't, of course) and ease them out of orbit. Then, tell everyone you're going to ease them back into orbit, but that they should pair up, or circle each other as a triple as though they were a star system. Use the guiding palm and bring them into orbit.

Ask them to dance with each other, and envision the journey a star must take during its lifetime, carried by the waves of the galaxy. Remind them that Ars Solis does not permit actual touch. They must dance without touching. Encourage them to express themselves as though they were releasing geysers of liquid nitrogen, or solar flares—even catching their own rings. Ask if they would join a star as a planet, or join a planet as a moon. Express that through a slow, flexible dance.

Ease them out of orbit with the guiding palm after a little bit. Smile and tell them that was the final workshop, and that this is a good time to get some water or go to the bathroom. In five minutes, the music will start and they will enter orbit as though they could dance through the cosmos.



"Unable are the loved to die, for love is immortality."

- Emily Dickinson

Once everyone reconvenes, inform them that one of the players may start out as an object around which to orbit, while the rest should start in the corners and join play when they wish. Ask them to change the person which they orbit around often, preferably with every new song that comes on, and remind them that they won't be speaking for the duration of the game.

When everyone is in position, dim down the lights. Remind everyone that although this is an extended dance, you may break away to sit in a chair, but alone, as objects in deep space never have company. If you're using a playlist as opposed to an extended track, inform the players that when the music stops, they should pause and contemplate new roles to play for the next song.

Then, start your playlist.

Don't use the guiding palm to ease anyone in at the start. If you have someone playing a central object around which to orbit, demonstrate by joining the dance and orbiting them temporarily, if only to inspire the other players to do so. If you don't have a central object, play as it until the next song, and depart during the pause or when someone else eases into the position.

Over the course of the game, wait a few songs until you use the guiding hand in any particularly manner. Let intimacy build, and demonstrate as an NPC comet how Ars Solis would work with a central star in such a minor passing.

Sometime in the middle, you want to start introducing drama in between your brief forays as oneorbit NPCs or temporarily captured moons. This is where the guiding palm becomes handy; abruptly, without warning, guide a player out of orbit. Gauge the reaction. See what happens if one player is a star with only one planet left. You yourself should contemplate your own metaphors for a situation, if only to do your best to contribute to the atmosphere.

If it seems as though a player you've guided out won't come back in, check in with them. They may simply think that they have to wait for you, and clarify with a whisper that they don't.

As you approach the end of your final track, you have two options: you may guide everyone out of orbit and leave a player in the center as a lonely object, or merge everyone together for a final, communal moment before the end of the game.

Once the music stops, thank everyone for playing. If they need to, they can take a brief water or bathroom break. There will be a small debriefing right after.

A Note on Music:

Once you are more familiar with how to run this, consider looking for music with lyrics in them and use that instead of ambience. It will result in a more intense game, but a game upon which all the players can more easily build upon.



"I would give up the unessential; I would give up my money, I would give up my life for my children; but I wouldn't give myself. I can't make it more clear; it's only something I am beginning to comprehend, which is revealing itself to me."

- Kate Chopin, The Awakening

As people get their drinks of water or go to the bathroom, sit down on the floor to begin reassembling the circle. Once everyone returns, ask everyone to share one part of the larp they enjoyed and describe what they thought the scene was about. Ideally, they'll speak about things like comets or planets or stars in passing, but if they speak about other things, don't cut them off.

Thank everyone again for participating in this game once you do this.

If anybody seems exceptionally torn up after the debriefing, pull up some chairs and hold a secondary debriefing to talk through this with them. Maintain the safe space and be supportive, as this is the best thing you can do for them right now. Once they regain their composure, tell them that you're around to talk to as you pack up your things. If you're at a convention, tell them where they're most likely to find you if they ever need to talk, and if you're not available or easily accessible, let them know that this is something they should feel safe to talk to their friends about.

If they're uncertain after this, give them some contact information. Even a friend request on Facebook would help.

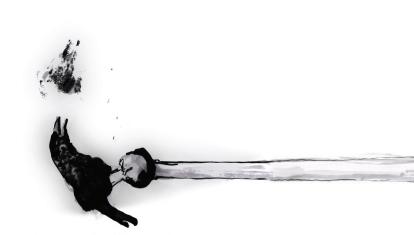
A CROW FUNERAL

BY TIM HUTCHINGS

Have you ever wanted to be part of a murder? Of crows, that is! In A Crow Funeral, players take on the roles of a community of crows that have discovered the body of one of their own. As they crowd around in a mournful-yet-raucous circle, the crows must determine how their friend expired.

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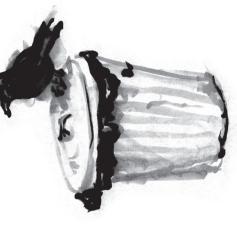
AWARDED FOR BEST INCORPORATION OF TOUCH



A Crow Funeral is a game for 2+ players which can play in 10-30 minutes. The game is intended for a busy space, like a convention or mall or the outdoors. Players should know that the game involves touching hands and people being shouted down for speaking out of turn.

In A Crow Funeral the players will take the roles of opinionated crows arguing the cause of death of a member of their murder. At the beginning of play players will split apart for a short while, then come together and join as a group. The game uses a simple handstacking mechanic guiding who can speak at any given moment. There is no conflict resolution mechanic.





Preparing for Play:

a crow funera

Form the players into a loose circle in an-out-of-the-way spot in a busy area. This circle may be formed in a sitting or standing ring, or around a table, as long as everyone can easily touch hands in the center. Players should take this opportunity to remove sharp or large rings. Read these rules aloud with each player taking a turn reading a paragraph.

A fellow crow has died and we will gather to mourn their passing, but more importantly to understand why they died. Not in a metaphysical way, but in a practical way - what killed this creature and how can we ensure it won't kill us as well? We are crows and this is the crow way.



The center of our circle is where the body of the deceased crow lies, this is where we will play most of the game.

After acquainting ourselves with the rules we will begin the game by spreading out, traveling in different directions for one minute. At the end of that one minute of travel we will stop in a safe place; this is our home. Around us is the environment we have spent our crow lives, these are the things to which we are acclimated and do not fear. Players will spend two minutes standing still and observing this environment while thinking peaceful, safe thoughts. Ask yourselves: What do I eat here? Where do I sleep? How do I spend my time?

Study the objects, the motion, the people around you. Listen to the sounds, smell the air. Nothing here is a threat.

While sitting in their home the crow should find a small object of some sort which can be used as a token: A pebble, a piece of paper, a stick, anything that conveniently fits into the palm of the hand. This object should be clean and safe to handle. If the player is uncomfortable taking something from the environment they may use something of their own, such as a coin or a die.

After the two minutes have elapsed all the crows will return to the play area for the funeral. As crows arrive they should arrange themselves back into their circle. When most of the crows have arrived the funeral will begin.

Beginning the Funeral:

To begin the funeral each player extends an empty, open, downward facing hand into the circle, forming a vertical stack of hands in the center. When a player speaks they move their hand to the top of the stack. When another player speaks they then move their hand to the top, covering the previous player. A player should not speak if their hand is not on top of the stack.



The purpose of the funeral is to determine how the deceased was killed and how this should affect the lives of the living. No understanding is gained from the body, that is not how crows see the world. Instead crows should compare their home environment to the area of the funeral; what is different and therefore possibly dangerous? Crows should argue from their own experience, based on the time they spent in their crow home.

Hev

If a crow ever speaks while another's hand is on top of the stack, or two crows attempt to speak over each other, or there is instability in the hand stack, or a crow begins speaking with an uncrowlike understanding of the environment, ALL the crows should begin shouting "Hey, hey, hey!" until the situation is rectified. If one crow hears another crow saying "Hey!" they should take up the cry and repeat it until the problem is identified and solved. Think about the scolding and arguing of crows; this is what you are doing.

Interruptions:

If anything or anyone not playing the game interrupts the crows they should break the circle and scatter, then regroup after the danger is gone. The circle reforms, the handstack remade, and play continues as before.

Ending the Funeral:

When a crow believes that they understand the nature of the danger they will place a closed hand on the handstack, inside their hand is their token. This action is done without speaking, and play will progress normally for the other crows. When the closed hand finally reaches the bottom of the hand stack the crow's belief about the cause of death is spoken aloud.



Other crows will say whether they agree or disagree, this is not a time for argument though a single sentence may be spoken in support or disagreement. If the entire murder is in agreement then the game ends immediately and the crows return to their lives, wiser and safer. If the group does not agree then the belief may either be discarded and all the crows return to the discussion, or the agreeing crows may withdraw their hands from the stack and leave the murder. If a crow withdraws their belief and stays with the murder they discard their token on the ground.

Leaving the murder is a serious and permanent decision, a new grouping is formed and the two murders will never be friendly again. Crows in the new murder are no longer bound by the rules of the funeral and may leave the play space or hover about the funeral offering commentary. They may speak freely as the hand stack rules do not apply to them.

Play then continues until the remaining crows have all resolved beliefs about the cause of death. Players may then gather for a short

Stop reading aloud here. Go play the game. Gather afterwards for a quick debrief.

Recommended questions for the debrief:

What informed the arguments of the crows? Will they actually be safer for what was learned at the funeral? If there was a split in the murder, how will those different beliefs affect crow society?

Did anyone drop their token to remain with the murder? What did this represent?

Whose hands were usually at the top of the stack? Whose were at the bottom? Did the people who were mostly at the bottom feel respected during the funeral?

Who is speaking the most during the debrief? Is there a correlation between how people are speaking now and how they spoke during

Designer's Notes:

This game was written in response to the 2015 Golden Cobra Challenge.

This game uses touch to track social interactions, both as a record of how recently players have spoken and as telegraphed intent as players move their hands into position before they speak. We can lend significance to the act of communication by tying it to an unrelated act, in this case physically moving your hand to the top of the stack.

The empathy experiment comes from the establishment of arbitrary frames of reference for the individual crows. Different crows come from different environments and as the players argue in the place of those crows it may help them reflect on the arbitrariness of their own beliefs.

This game was created by Tim Hutchings, of PlaGMaDA.org. He also drew the pictures. This game could not have been made without the generous support of the freeform game community in Portland, Oregon, especially Ben Kaser, Jessie Giardino, and the whole Games to Gather group.

Alternate Titles: A Murder Mystery, Caws of Death Unknown





GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

DESSERTBY JOHN YANUSH

Dessert is a simple free-form game, that shows how important friendship is, and how much energy and care is needed to maintain this relation or cultivate it to grow.

Dessert

Dessert is a simple free-form game, that shows how important friendship is, and how much energy and care is needed to maintain this relation or cultivate it to grow. By no means this game has fixed approach or mood to play with, thus could be funny improv with some meaning, serious exercise of social behavior, game of contest and contestation or anything in-between. Basically, this is just bro-story, so no matter how "mint" or "strawberry" will be your interpretation, keep the friendship element at the core of your Dessert. And remember that as there should be some sugar, sour and bitter are fine counterparts.

PREPARATIONS

If you have some experience with improvised theatre or live-action/pen-and-paper RPG, then you and your co-players will be ready in few minutes or so. If this is your first game/exercise, then please read carefully and consult rules with other participants. To play this game you need about two hours of time, and few printed sheets (with pens) for voting.

Ideal number of Players is four, with minimal number of three, and maximum of six. With four Players you will have two "teams" of friends, with one pair playing scenes (Active) and other observing them (Inactive). They will be changing their Active/Inactive status one after another.

Dessert doesn't need a Moderator (Director/Referee/Master/etc), but if you have very limited time or inexperienced Players (or you want to cut dialogs in the right time), then be one or designate non-Player. With or without Moderator, most of the decisions are left to Inactive Players, which hold the power to decide about relations of the Active Players. In games without Moderator, Inactive Players can also give signals to Active Players to move with the dialogs or finish the scene but they shouldn't just break or force anything.

Before game will start, all participants should clarify any immediately visible issues, like maximal time (both for whole play time or individual scenes), role of the audience (if done as show), use of furniture//items/props (if any) and choosing of language (both in a case of multi-lingual group or severity of street language/curses).

Also rules of presenting friendship require Players to touch each other's hands (palms clenched in fists), and to be able to repeatedly keep arms stretched in the air for a couple of minutes. If there are some problems with those requirements, you must decide if there will be general change of rules or just exception for one or more Players.

GAME BASICS - TEAMS

Firstly, form teams of two Players each (with the exception of three-Player game). Each team consist of two Players playing friends, but they are not Super-Bros or Best-Friends-Forever. At least not yet. Each team is based on some simple antagonisms. These are:

Team 1 - Rich Friend & Poor Friend Team 2 - Old Friend & Young Friend Now give, or let to choose, simple names to all Players. You can go with stereotypical John, Carl, Bill, Kate, Sally or similar, but most important is to all participants to remember their new nicknames. You can also ignore names, and just use "bro", "dude", "mate", "sistah" and similar callings.

At the end of the Team forming, other Team (or Moderator) should give few vague elements to the friendship story - what they do for a living, how they met, what they plan to do, etc. The key is to provide other Team with some ideas to play with, and not giving them impossible combination unable to be used.

If you want other teams than those above, or you plan to play this game several times, you can add other, more suitable options. Antagonisms work best, as most of the time, diversity help friendship. If you use this game with three-Players option, then it is recommended to give the third Player an intermediate role - for an example: "Medium-wage Friend" (with Rich & Poor) or "Teamleader Friend" (with Boss & Employee). Of course, you can mix a little more when you will master this *Dessert* of yours.

Some other Teams could be:

Team 3 - Scientist Friend & Activist Friend

Team 4 - Boss Friend & Employee Friend

GAME BASICS - RELATION

At the beginning of the game, relation between friends (played by the Players) in the same Teams is just a <u>Simple Friendship</u>, and this is showed by the "bro-fists" and stretched arms - Players should keep them joined in the air as long, as they are Active Players (the best position is when both Players are standing or sitting about 4 feet/1,2 metre away from each other). If Active Players, by any reason, will break physical contact of "bro-fist", their friendship will experience a setback - this will put a scene to an end, and decrease the advance of relation, if any was made. Note that further advancement past <u>Simple Friendship</u> is possible on the course of the game, but it is not possible to completely destroy this relation, which could be viewed as optimistic, but that is a game, after all (which probably won't stop you from creating options for complete destruction of friendship).

Relations can change by accidental break of the fist-to-fist contact (Players shouldn't try to willingly destroy their friendship), but most of the time, relation will change if they will play convincing friends. After every turn of scenes, Passive Players judge how convincing Active Players were, using voting forms (you will find forms at the end of the game instructions). Every Inactive Player votes independently, and when all finish, one of them (or Moderator) presents the outcome. More "Yes" make relation to advance. More "No" decrease any advancements by one step. If there is a tie, nothing changes. Remember that there are no "below zero" relations - they simply cannot go worst than starting level (Simple Friendship).

When Team is granted an advancement to their relation, they have to act accordingly, and play out their new feelings. Also, the visible symbol of their friendship - "bro-fist", is evolving. When advanced from Simple Friendship, they will get Companionship, and they should now stand or sit closer, and their arms should be bended to easily support their joined fists. If they will not lose this level by the voting, and eventually advance again, they will be granted Bond, which is ultimate step on the road to life-lasting relations we all admire. Players with Bond should stand or sit as close as possible, their "bro-fist" kept simple, and their arms rested or at ease.

GAME BASICS - SCENES

When game will start for a Team (or later, the Team change its status from Inactive), there will be two scenes. In this scenes, Players act to show the friendship of characters they play. Those Players in other, Inactive Teams provide few ideas where the Active Team's characters are and what they are doing, and they should choose from this advices, and play along. If your game have Moderator, he can provide ideas, and be more strict on some of the scenes' background. Remember, that "bro-fist" must be maintained as long as scene is played, and only when scene will end, Players can break free and rest their arms.

In every turn of the scenes, there should be one "action" scene, and one "food" scene. Action scene should be placed somewhere, where characters need help or advice from each other, like sailing boat or nightclub. Action scene gives Players opportunity to show their characters relation, and improvise the surroundings and events. There is no limit to the length of the action scene, but it is recommended to keep it in about five minutes. Inactive Players and/or Moderator can signal to Active Players to finish, but they can also support during a scene, when additional ideas are needed.

Food scene is little different. All rules above, from "action" scene apply, but there is some variations - food scene is always complementary to the action scene, and it is always after the "action" (the only exception is the starting turn of the game, as you will see in later part of this materials). Food scene can, but not must, be related (be a continuation) to the action scene before, but it will make easier for Players to improvise fast. The most important thing to remember about "food" scene, is that Players can force the ideal vision of the relation of their characters, and Inactive Players (who will judge, how convincing their current relation is) must take this sweetened moments into the account, along with more harsh decision about "action" scene. Food scene should be shorter than action scene, and about three minutes should be enough.

PLAYING THE GAME

When all Players are ready, you can start by choosing (could be randomly) which Team will be first (or two of three Players, if you play Three-Player game). This Team is now Active with their fist joined in the air, and other Team is Inactive and wait. Now proceed to the first turn of scenes.

First turn is unique, as it has reverse set of scenes - "food" is first, and "action" later. In later turns it will be action, then food, so all Players should try to use starting scenes' composition to their advantage.

Few ideas for characters:

They have met at the party
 They are distant relatives
 They were at the same school
 They have met at work
 They like the same artist
 They both live nearby

Few ideas for teams:

Broker & Assistant
 Bookseller & Student
 Dancer & Craftsman
 Veterinarian & Cook
 Accountant & Nurse
 Analyst & Musician

First food scene should be about sweets. This could be anything from chocolate bars, to butterscotch pudding or even fancy ice & fruit desserts. Just keep in mind, that the scene is about shared interests and friendship. This is a great moment to invent how characters met, why they became friends (and why a cherry is so much better than an apple).

After the food scene is over, Active Players can have a few moments to rest their arms, and prepare to action scene. However, this few moments of break can be omitted, if all agree. Action scene should have less sugar and more sour or bitter taste.

Few ideas for action scenes:

- Nightclub
- Shopping
- Sport match
- Beach
- Cooking
- Fishing/Hunting
- Movie/Theater
- Climbing/Swimming
- Airplane/Ship
- Camping/Skiing

After both scenes, Inactive Players judge the efforts of the Active Players, and now they become Active Players and have to play their scenes, and will be judged in the same way (if you have more than two Teams, then just one of them, and after their scenes and voting pass, another Team will get his Active status, and so on).

Every subsequent turn of scenes (two scenes and judging for every Team) is the same, you just need to remember that action scene is first, and food scene is second.

There is no "win" or "loose" in the Dessert, but all Players should try to advance the friendship of their characters, and convince other they did well. If at the end of the game, Team had managed to advance its relation to <u>Bond</u> (and kept it that way), then this Team is pronounced as life-long friends. This is why there is no fixed number of turns of scenes, as there should be a chance for all Teams to advance at least once. Of course, if you are interested in more competitive play, you should set a number of turns of the game. Between five and seven should be enough, but you can prefer much longer (or shorter) gameplay.

GAME VARIATIONS

Along the text you can find few optional rules to make this game more intense, but still, it's just *Vanilla Dessert*. This game is very easy to change or converse to serve purposes other than funny improvisation and light morality play. It's impossible to predict how different will be your vision, but here you can find a couple of ideas. Colour-coded (or more dessert-coded).

Mint Dessert would change friendship into parenthood, and try to emulate how relation between parent and a child can change. Both Three-Player (two parents, one child) and Four-Player (two teams with one parent and a one child in each) game options are good. Scenes should reflect time spent together, and can be easily modified for the right tone.

Strawberry Dessert would be about friendship and love interwoven, between a boy and a girl, so you need at least two Teams, each consisting of male and female Player. Rules are very similar to Vanilla, but there should be fourth level of relation (above Bond), called Love, and at this level of friendship, "bro-fist" changes into joined palms. This game version should be very clearly consulted between Players to avoid inconvenience.

Orange Dessert can be more daring, and move to subjects that Strawberry barely touches, bringing more emotional (and possibly even sexual) tension. When you will choose the Orange, friendship changes into affair, and have four levels (Simple Affair, Affair, Serious Affair, Romance) each symbolized by palm touching the back of the other Player (with reduced distance and stretch of arms after every advancement, just like in Vanilla). There should be no more than two Teams, male and female in each, and Three-Player version should not be used. Optional rule for Orange Dessert is to play it really intense, and allow for non-mixed gender in Teams, give alternative to play opposite-sex character, and to ignore Three-Player version ban. No matter how much of an Orange you will use, this game option is a serious exercise, and should be carefully consulted.

Do you agree that their relation is convincing?	Do you agree that their relation is convincing?
□ YES	□ YES
□ NO	□ NO
Do you agree that their relation is convincing?	Do you agree that their relation is convincing?
□ YES	□ YES
□ NO	□ NO
Do you agree that their relation is convincing?	Do you agree that their relation is convincing?
□ YES	□ YES
□ NO	□ NO

GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

DRINK ME BY BETSY ISAACSON

Three mysterious travelers, all hailing from Victorian London, run into one another at a place of great power and mystery -- the famed Cave of Elixir. Within the cave there are six potions, which could perhaps grant their deepest desires, and they all seem heedless of any price they might have to pay.





Drink Me is a theatrical experience for four players and an Orchestrator.

A theatrical experience—also known as "interactive literature" or as "live-action roleplay"—is basically a play without a script or an audience. It is a chance to live out a story, guided by the game but ultimately directed only by your own thoughts and actions.

If you're playing, you'll be assuming the role of a Primary Character (or "PC"). You'll be given a character sheet telling you who your character is and what he wants, as well as a rulesheet that tells you the game works, and some supplementary documents that provide more information about the setting. Your job will be to internalize all that content and then to spend the game acting in character, helping to create the story by playing your part.

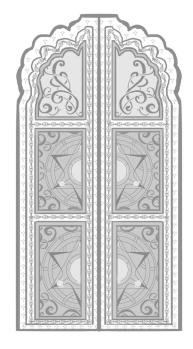
The Orchestrator runs the show. It's his task to keep everything running smoothly, to answer player questions, and to ensure that the players are having fun. Finding an Orchestrator is the first step towards making the game happen, because almost every other part of "making the game happen" becomes his job. Being Orchestrator is rather like being the captain of a ship, or the director of the play -- you have responsibility, but you also have authority.

(In this case, the responsibility is not onerous. *Drink Me* is mostly a simple and straightforward game.)

It is important that players go into the game knowing no more than their characters should know. To that end, if you are playing a PC, do not read past this overview. You will be given materials by your Orchestrator, and those documents will contain all the information that you should possess. *Drink Me* is, in part, a game of intrigue and mystery; if you know more than you should, the game will be unfair and less fun for everyone else, and certainly less fun for you.

Based in major part on text originally written by Warren Tusk.





CREDITS

- Game by Betsy Isaacson
- Cover Art by Clarissa Hart
- Design & Layout by Patrick Tsao



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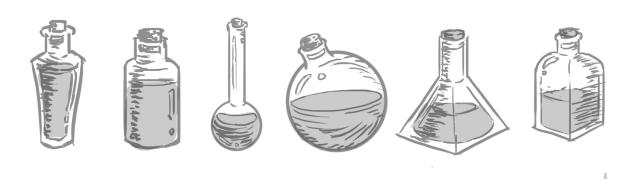
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HELLO!

If you're reading this rule sheet, you have stumbled upon the legendary $C_{A\!V\!E}$ OF $\pounds_{L\!I\!X\!I\!R}$, a cache of potent potions created by King Solomon himself! Here are the rules for interacting with the cave.

- 1 Within the Cave of Elixir there are six different phials containing six different potions. The phials cannot be removed from the cave. The potions cannot be removed from the phials by any method other than "being consumed by a living creature."
- 2 The Cave of Elixir is in a delicate state. Approximately an hour after you enter it, it will collapse, crushing the phials and trapping or killing those who remain inside. So if you want to drink any potions, you'd better drink them fast!
- 3 · The potions inside the Cave of Elixir are distinguishable from one another by their colors. However, there is no public information on what effects any of these potions might have, or which effects might be paired with which potions.
- 4. If you drink a potion, you will know its effect immediately. Unless the effect is obvious, no one else will know.
- 5 . One phial of potion contains only enough potion for one person to drink and feel an effect.
- 6 . It is possible to die in this game.

THAT'S ALL!



A SCIENTIFICK RECLUSE (Edgar Eakins)



"I never want to die," your sister told you once. She had just finished reading Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. "If I die, make me a Frankenstein body. A beautiful one, with pale skin scarred like spiderwebs and shiny dark doll's hair. I want to live forever, Edgar."

Three weeks later, she killed herself.

In the bedroom next to yours shed slept with a boy whold climbed up to the balcony to get her. Alexander Clay was his name -- he had a deceptively gentle mouth -- and the next morning your parents had found her in bed, lying there, sticky with semen and sweat, missing a maidenhead. News of the affair had already travelled clear across town.

Your father raged and called her a whore. Your mother wept and blamed books for it all. You went to Lily with all the righteous rage of a little brother betrayed. "Alexander Clay ruined you."

She'd turned away from you tearfully, then turned away from everyone, and the next day a copper came by and said she'd thrown herself off the London Bridge. Her body was never found.

You built a new one.

It took years to find snips of pale skin from fresh cadavers and doll's hair as glossy as Lily would like it, quality enough that it wouldn't break and curl in your preservatives. You became an expert in preserving dead bodies, an accidental magician, searching for ways of raising the dead -- the sister youd killed with your careless words. You would give her the Frankenstein body she said she wanted, once, long ago.

You've finally found a potion you think will get the job done -- your studies of the occult point to a fabled potion that doesn't work just on the freshly killed, but can summon a soul from anywhere and house it in a new body. The potion can be found, your research tells you, in the fabled Cave of Elixir, a cache of the world's most potent potions said to be created by King Solomon himself. The Cave is said to house only a single draught of this potion, enough only for the man who drinks it to give new life to a single soul, but one draught will be enough for you. You just need to bring back Lily.

The haphazard searching of an accidental magician took years to reveal the Cave's location. Unfortunately, two others stumbled upon the location the same time you did. One is Vesper Von Eternity, an Englishwoman whose adventures in India have been extensively chronicled by pulp magazines. You know next to nothing about her except what the magazines say, but if she's truly stared down tigers, she could be a good ally -- unless she's also looking for resurrection.

The other person who found the cave you're less willing to give the benefit of the doubt.

Alexander Clay is immortal. You've been tracking his escapades for thirteen years, ever since he slept with your sister. By now it's clear that he never ages. He's escaped assassinations and accidents unscathed, even as those close by him fall. Given your sister's predilections, you can't begrudge the existence of immortality -- but you can begrudge it to Alexander, who's been petty and destructive in his use of it. Lily, it appears, was nothing very special. Clay makes a game of seducing young women. He seems to take a particular, purely sadistic pleasure in bedding the sort of lady who afterwards will be considered 'ruined'; the only activity he approaches with quite as much enthusiasm is the seduction of naive young men, who are afterwards inevitably disgraced.

When you hate people you don't want to kill them. When you hate people you want to hurt them.

You want to hurt Alexander Clay as much as his immortality will allow.

Your desire to hurt Clay is intricate and cold. He deprived you of the one person you ever loved; if he ever had a loved one, you'd wish the same on him. You want to find his weaknesses, you want to drive the knife in, you want to hurt him like he hurt you. Whatever he wants in the Cave of Elixir, you want him not to find it. If he holds anything dear, you want to take it away from him.

There's a potion that kills in the Cave of Elixir. It can kill even immortals, they say.

If Clay fears death, perhaps you will kill him.

You very much hope he doesn't fear death.

(Killing is quick. Killing is easy. You want him to hurt, and hurt, and hurt.)



SPECIALS:

The Vessel: You've carried Lily's body -- or, rather, the stitched-together homunculus that will be Lily's body -- into the Cave with you. This homunculus is sufficiently large that its presence in the Cave is public knowledge. You must announce what you're carrying, and describe it, as soon as you enter the scene. Once you find the resurrection potion, you may seat Lily's soul in the homunculus.

The Scientifick Method: One of the potions in the Cave of Elixir is supposed to kill whomever drinks it. You'd rather not drink that potion. To avoid any mishap, you've brought with you an eyedropper and three white mice. You may feed a mouse trace amounts of any potion, via eyedropper, to see what effect it has.

One drop, enough for a mouse, is trivial. After you feed a mouse from a phial, there will still be enough potion in that phial for a person to drink and feel an effect.

As far as you know, the mouse will only be able to observably detect the death potion.

Giving an eyedropper-sized amount of of potion to a person will have no effect.



A MAN ABOUT TOWN (Alexander Clay)



You're a pervert.

Specifically, you're a sodomite. Or "invert," the term is now. One of those particularly tragic ones: rejected by your father, disowned by your family, a brief stint in jail for bedding the wrong sex. Over the years you've made yourself a monster, the very picture of a debauched deviant, obsequious, dapper, charming, and completely sociopathic. You seduce young men and young ladies (the latter's not your preference, but it's what's expected of perverts), ruin their lives, and escape unscathed. The "unscathed" part is really the only inevitability -- you're entirely immortal.

Right.

At age twenty-six, you and your lover realized that you had wholly stopped aging. At age twenty-six you weren't a monster; you were living shabbily in an apartment in East London after being disowned by your family, with Stephan McMahon, the love of your life, who was in every way the opposite of what you've become.

Stephan was gentle, oddly wise, and utterly unselfconscious; he came from a family thatd been poor, and didn't give a fuck if anyone knew he was queer. Stephan found you drunk in an alley after your second stint in prison, and brought you into his flat. You thought he was a sailor, picking you up for a blow, but he never forced himself on you, just brought you inside and fed you soup and salty crackers for the better part of an evening.

He didn't want anything in return either. That part confused you. He found you attractive but wouldn't initiate, not without your permission.

You started living with him, bringing in what you could -- money from clerical work, mostly, what with your hyper-specialized socially-bound gentleman's skill set. You made him iced tea, and read poetry badly, and he put a hand on your shoulder and helped you remember after two stints in prison that you were still human.

Then he was killed and your humanity fled.

They killed Stephan and they called him a monster; they said he was out to dismantle society. Every stereotype of something insidious and sinister was trotted out to damn him and -- it wasn't an oath, not something you swore, it wasn't a one-day decision -- in the wake of his death, for something like revenge, you turned yourself into what they thought he was. You wormed your way back into polite society, kept your mouth sweet and eyes winsome, and seduced. You tore families apart, societies apart, hurting them in all the ways Stephan never had.

It didn't last forever, of course. Nothing lasts forever when you'll never die.

There's a thrill that comes from seduction and ruin, from seeing someone's hypocrisy collapse at their feet. It's vengeful and nasty and used to remind you of Stephan but now it doesn't because it's not something Stephan would ever do. You know minds have a tendency to valorize the slain, but even when he lived, you knew.

You want him back. They say he's in Hell. You want to go to Hell, then.

It's more difficult than you'd think. Bullets through the head just heal. You tried to hang yourself three times: it didn't work and was supremely painful, though that was probably good practice for eternal torment. Something supernatural clearly made you immortal. You need something supernatural to kill you.

And you were never a bad researcher.

The Cave of Elixir contains a potion that can kill those who live forever.

So you'll drink it and die and go to Hell and protect Stephan from whatever of Hell's torment you can, because they say pain can strip your humanity away but nothing of Hell can make you more inhuman than you are now. Stephan's what keeps you un-monstrous.

What else? You know there's an immortality potion in the cave and you want to not drink that one, because you honestly don't know if immortality stacks. You want the death potion to work, dammit, not just remove one superfluous layer of immortality and leave you with another.

You want very badly to successfully suicide.

Right! But there are two other people who stumbled upon the cave at the same time you did. One is Edgar Eakins, a mad scientist who's been chasing you; he wants revenge on you for sleeping with and "ruining" his sister, something that happened years ago. You don't know if you should let him know you're already searching for death -- you're sorry about the sister, but he's an ass and you don't want to give him the satisfaction.

The other is Vesper von Eternity, a Lady of Adventure who's been written up in pulps. She's polarizing, which you can't help but admire. So you cornered her, fast, before she got to the cave.

"What do you want the potions for?"

She looked straight at you. "I want to live forever."



SPECIALS:

Immortality: Unless an effect specifically says that it kills you in spite of immortality, you cannot die. You also cannot age, which is great.

Sleight of Hand: Once per game, when someone (including yourself) is about to drink a potion, you may surreptitiously switch that potion with the potion of your choice. People will probably notice the switch... but not until after the potion of your choice is consumed in place of the intended potion.



A LADY OF ADVENTURE (Vesper von Eternity)



"I never want to die," you told your brother once. You had just finished reading Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. "If I die, make me a Frankenstein body. A beautiful one, with pale skin scarred like spiderwebs and shiny dark doll's hair. I want to live forever, Edgar."

Three weeks later, you killed yourself.

Back then, you weren't Vesper von Eternity -- you were Lily Eakins. Bookish, longing for a life of adventure, out of place in her own body, trapped by her brother's love. In the bedroom next to your brother's you lost your maidenhead to a man with a gentle mouth named Alexander Clay. The next morning your parents found you in bed, sticky with semen and sweat, with news of your misdeed already clear across town.

Alexander had seduced you, recited poetry, said he loved you, but you never saw him again.

Your father raged and called you a whore. Your mother wept and blamed books for it all. Your little brother looked at you with all the sneering, jealous rage of a sibling betrayed. "Alexander Clay ruined you, yeah?"

You'd turned away from him tearfully, then, turned away from everyone, and the next day you threw yourself off London Bridge.

They say that when you're dying, you see your life pass before your eyes. Instead you experienced a perfect moment of clarity. You had, you realized, trapped yourself -- denied yourself a life of adventure, let yourself be held back by your parents' expectations, your brother's, yours. You could have brushed off what your family thought. You could have run away and never come back. Instead you had thrown yourself off a bridge, not even because you wanted it, but because it was what you were supposed to do.

At that very last moment, you didn't want to die. At that very last moment, you hated yourself.

When next you woke up, you weren't afraid of anything.

Miraculously, you were uninjured. You had been pulled from the water by the good ship Narwhal, heading to India, sorry we can't take you back, Miss.

You told them not to worry. You didn't want to go back.

On the Narwhal, the crew treated you like something precious. When you grew well enough to walk about on deck, they began teaching you things -- how to speak some broken Hindi, how to spit and how to gamble, how to steer just by the stars and play the pipes and play the banjo.

In Bombay you asked an Indian man to teach you how to charm cobras. He was reluctant; you were an Englishwoman, he expected hysteria. After some hours, he was amazed by your steadiness. He taught you to charm the largest of the cobras. People flocked from all over Bombay to see the Englishwoman dressed like an Indian who could charm snakes, and often people.

You travelled when you could and sought adventure always, climbing red rock cliffs to Jaipur libraries, hopping new-built already-rickety trains, trading wine and riddles with a Raja and sleeping in a palace that floated on the sea. In the jungle near Udaipur, you stared down a tiger: graceful and fearless, entirely of itself. But as that was true of the tiger, so, you realized, was it true of you.

You began writing up your adventures, sending them to a London press; they became shockingly popular pulps and you made yourself a tidy sum. The name you took for your pulp adventures, for the reading public, was ostensibly German and highly improbable -- Vesper von Eternity.

Thirteen years after Lily's suicide, high adventure and pulp fame in hand, you went to a doctor for a lump on your breast. You discovered you had cancer, a year to live, or less.

At around the same time, you heard, again, the name of your erstwhile paramour. And you discovered that, of all people, Alexander Clay could never die.

He hadn't aged for thirteen years -- longer, if the rumors were to be believed. Diseases and bullets couldn't kill him and you want what he has, badly.

And he left a very clear trail, searching for the fabled "Cave of Elixir." You did your research and found that, in tales, that cave contained a potion that granted its drinker immortality.

You want that potion.

You don't know what Alexander wants in the cave -- he already can live forever. There are other potions in the cave; perhaps he's come to get one of those. You hope he doesn't get what he wants.

(You don't begrudge him for sleeping with you so much as you begrudge that thirteen years later, as far as you can tell, he's still doing the exact same thing: sleeping with girls, sleeping with boys, spreading the story and ruining them. He has immortality, infinite time, and he spends it driving adolescents to suicide. You can't imagine anything more inexplicable, or pathetic.)

The other person going for the cave -- who seems to have found it independently, without following you or Alexander -- is Edgar Eakins, your brother.

He wants to raise you from the dead. He's built a Frankenstein body, snips of pale skin and doll's hair, and it's beautiful and it disgusts you and you don't want to be that thing. He wants to resurrect you and you're afraid he'll find out how. Afraid that whatever he manages will pull your soul from your body, ill though it is, and put it in the body he's built, the body of a dead girl, and you don't think you could stand that.

But you cannot -- cannot tell him who you are.

You don't want to be Lily again. Lily was a coward, scared, trapped, trapped by her family's expectations, her class's expectations, her brother's expectations, her own. Your brother wants you to be the girl you were thirteen years ago, when you looked after him and played your part and you're not that, you can't be that, you're not even sure you love him anymore, and you don't want to be the miracle girl, survivor of suicide, back again.

You want to be Vesper von Eternity.

Lily is dead. Lily should stay dead.

Vesper von Eternity wants to live forever.



SPECIALS:

I'm Not That Girl: Edgar doesn't recognize you; you've changed a lot in thirteen years. Alexander doesn't recognize you either; you met him, briefly, before you entered the cave. He asked you what you wanted in the Cave of Elixir; you told him you wanted immortality. You see no use in keeping that desire secret.

Seeing Red: The potions are all different colors, you know, but your favorite color is and always has been red. You've nothing to guide you in the Cave of Elixir except sheer instinct and your shockingly good luck...and a fortune-teller's admonition, a few days ago, to keep your favorite color in mind. So you've decided, if no better options present themselves, to drink the red drink and see what happens when you do.

The Pocket-Watch: You seem to be the only person on this expedition who's brought a pocket watch, so by default you're in charge of tracking the cave's one-hour time limit. However, the pocket watch you brought with you (which you acquired in an adventure) is very special: at your bidding, it can slow time slightly, allowing you and your companions a bit more than the cave's allotted hour.

You begin the game with sixty minutes on the clock: once per game, if you so choose, you may add five minutes to that time.



A DEAD MAN (Stephan McMahon)



Your name is Stephan McMahon. Alexander Clay is the love of your life. You are a homosexual, a man who likes other men, and you didn't care right up until it killed you.

In the slums of East London, you grew up near to starving. After that, nothing seemed so dire. When other boys wanted girls, you wanted other boys, and yah, it led to some teasing, but other people wanted and did much stupider things, so you figured you were all right.

It took you 'til you met Alexander to realize how lucky you were.

Alexander Clay had a face like broken glass. In East London, in a gutter, you tripped over his body and woke him from a stupor. You gave him your shoulder and helped him stutter-stumble to your shabby flat and fed him hot soup and crackers. For three days he whimpered and shivered in your bed. On the fourth, he asked if you wanted money or wanted to fuck him as payment. You gaped at him. You wanted nothing.

(You wanted him to stay.)

He called himself nasty bitter and vengeful; his kindness was clumsy, his words sharp and bruised. To you he looked ravaged, ripped into pieces by two stays in prison, his family, himself. Like you, he was a homosexual. Unlike you, he hated himself.

(You wanted him to stop hating himself. You wanted him to stay, and live.)

He stayed, and lived, and you were so lucky.

He did clerk-work, the bread and butter of disgraced gentry living in slums. You did day labor as a stevedore. He cooked and kissed you and wrote mediocre poetry.

You were never rich in money.

One day you discovered that he had stopped aging. You both agreed that this was alarming. You both agreed you had to do research. Neither of you really did any, though.

(To be honest, given the nature of the problem, it never seemed very urgent.)

The last thing you remember is dying.

You don't remember death -- you simply remember dreading it. You remember the crowd that choked you with bodies, the mob, the storm, blood pouring from your head, *my skull is cracked,* wetness on your skin, your heartbeat. Doubling over. Dying. Your heart beat.

You don't remember being dead, but you know you don't want to go back to where you were.

You want to find Alexander Clay.

(How long has it been since you died? He probably did something stupid. When he was hurt he could wring himself out, until he was as empty as a ghost, and attack other people. You could always calm him down -- he was always pliant with you -- but you've been dead, you know you've been dead. Who has he lashed out at? And how has he hurt himself?)

You need to find Alexander.



CASTING THE PLAYERS:



To run *Drink Me* as a theatrical experience, you'll need:

- Three sufficiently enthusiastic and unspoiled players.
- A private room to play in.
- A table or other flat surface, for holding drinks.
- Six glasses, each containing a liquid of a different color. (For this, water with food coloring is sufficient, though at the Orchestrator's discretion, fruit juices, alcohol or other beverages may be used.)
- Optionally, costuming (costuming is certainly not necessary, but tends to add to atmosphere).

Once three sufficiently enthusiastic and unspoiled people have been recruited for a run of *Drink Me*, you'll have to cast the players. This step, more than any other, requires the Orchestrator to make independent judgment calls...but, that said, a few recommendations are worth bearing in mind.

- Edgar Eakins has an exceedingly small chance of getting a "happy ending" should he not at some point rethink his ambitions regarding Lily's resurrection. Eakins's player should be someone who is comfortable grappling with this difficulty, and who will not cease to have fun upon learning his "goal" is not as straightforward as it seems.
- Alexander Clay should be played by someone who will not be unhappy to engage with the character's homosexuality and history as a seducer.
- Vesper von Eternity's player should be comfortable grappling with issues of terminal illness and traumatic sexual experience.
- If any of your players is particularly sensitive about the topic of suicide, this is almost certainly not the game for them.

As a general matter: this game is actually pretty dark and pretty intense, despite its brevity and its playful central mechanic. Try to find players who will be OK with that, and make sure the players you have are adequately prepared.

PREPARING FOR GAME:



Once players have been cast, each player should be given a copy of their character sheet as well as a copy of the rules. While all this information may be sent digitally to players, the author recommends also printing hard copies of all relevant sheets for players to look over before the game; digital devices can fail inconveniently, and players may wish to mark up hard copies of their sheets.

Before the game, the Orchestrator should also fill six glasses (ideally transparent ones) with different-colored liquids. Given the amount of potion-drinking that goes on in this game, the author recommends using water tinted with food coloring; other liquids, imbibed in sufficient quantity, may quickly become sticky, heavy or intoxicating.

The colors of the various potions are left wholly to the discretion of the Orchestrator, excepting the "Sight" potion, which must be associated with a red drink in order to interact properly with Vesper's power. All six of them should be easily distinguishable, however.

The game, being a three-person affair, requires only a very small space; a table upon which the six

"potions" sit, and optionally a candle (or several) for atmosphere, should be plenty sufficient.

Cards describing each potion's effect can be found on page 18 of this manual, and should be clipped out for the Orchestrator pre-game. Likewise, cards representing Edgar's mice should be clipped out and handed to Edgar's player pre-game, and Vesper should be provided with a pocket-watch (or equivalent timekeeping device) before the game begins.

DURING GAME:



Running "Drink Me" isn't complicated; during the game proper, the primary task of the Orchestrator is to keep time during play. (Even there the Orchestrator has some redundancy. Vesper von Eternity's player should also be keeping time). The simplest way to do this is to set an alarm for an hour after game start; you should then ask the player of Vesper Von Eternity to tell you if and when she decides to add five minutes to the clock.

Likewise, it's recommended that the Orchestrator read over the rules, lore and character sheets before the game. Keep them handy during the game itself, in case players have unanticipated questions.

When a player drinks a potion, the Orchestrator should hand him or her a card describing the potion's effect. Cards for this purpose are included on page 18 of this PDF.

The Orchestrator should decide in advance which magical effects pair with which colors of potion, and then be strictly consistent about this throughout the game. A cheat sheet is recommended.

POTION EFFECTS:



Pain: Choose a body within line of sight as your target. Simply by willing it, you may now cause that body's bearer incredible pain. The terrible pain you cause will cripple the bearer for up to ten seconds; he or she will be unable to speak while in pain, and will be unable to drink potions or stop other player characters from drinking potions. You may cause your target excruciating pain a maximum of once per thirty seconds; you may continue to effectively cause pain even when your target is out of sight. Your ability to produce this effect ends only when you, or your target, dies.

Soul: Choose a soul that exists anywhere in Heaven, Hell, or Earth as your target. You may now seat this soul in a body of your choice that is within line of sight.

Life: You are now immortal. You cannot sicken, age, or die from violence unless an effect specifically says that it kills you in spite of immortality. If you were already immortal, you now possess an additional "instance" of immortality.

Death: In exactly forty minutes, you will perish. This is true even if you are currently immortal. If you are currently possessed of multiple instances of immortality, you immediately lose one of them; the others remain unaffected.

Sight: Choose two vials, empty or full. You now know the effect of the potions that are or were contained within each vial so chosen. However, you feel an irresistible compulsion to identify and announce the effects of those two potions to everyone else in your presence.

Gift: Pick an empty vial. You may now refill that vial with the potion it previously contained.

Potion effects of the "pick a target" variety need not be expended immediately: a drinker of "Pain", "Soul" or "Gift" may wait several minutes, or several years, before finally choosing a target for the potion's effect. Likewise, a drinker of "Sight" may wait as long as they please before choosing potions to identify; however, once the two potions are chosen, the drinker is hit immediately with the irresistible compulsion to reveal their effects.

All effects described above are learned by the drinker of the relevant potion as soon as that potion is consumed (or by the user of the "Sight" potion as soon as they choose which potions they want to identify.) There are, however, some effects that will NOT be revealed to the players in this way. These are discussed below.

Souls are always immortal; only bodies die. Once a body dies, the soul inhabiting it is expelled. That soul goes immediately to Heaven or Hell, and stays there unless later placed in another viable body. A soul in Heaven or Hell, or on Earth, may be placed in a viable body via the "Soul" potion.

However, killing a body is not the only way to expel a soul from it.

If the "Soul" potion is used to place a soul in a body already inhabited by another soul, the original soul is immediately expelled from that body, to be replaced by the newcomer.

Ex: If Alexander Clay, in trying to resurrect his lover Stephan, moves Stephan's soul into Edgar's body, Edgar's soul is expelled from that body and Edgar effectively "leaves the cave" -- his soul is now in Heaven or Hell, and can only be brought back by another use of the Soul potion. Stephan, resurrected, will find his soul animating Edgar's body.

A body without a soul inhabiting it becomes inanimate. If the "Soul" potion is used to place a soul from the body of someone already present in the cave into another body within the cave, the original body falls and becomes inanimate while the new body is animated by the newly-resident soul.

Ex: If Edgar Eakins, in trying to resurrect his sister, moves the soul of Lily Eakins/Vesper Von Eternity from Vesper's body into the corpse he's sewn together, Vesper's body would fall to the floor of the cave, inanimate, while Edgar's homunculus would be newly animated by Lily/Vesper.

The "Life" potion makes a person's body immortal; it does nothing to the soul. If a person drinks the "Life" potion in one body, then is moved to another body by the "Soul" potion, the effects of the "Life" potion do not carry over to that second body.

Ex: If Vesper Von Eternity, in her original body, drinks the Life potion, that original body becomes immortal. If Edgar Eakins then moves Vesper's soul into his homunculus, the immortality does not move with Vesper's soul; instead, Vesper is now possessed of a (bizarre) mortal body while Vesper's original, inanimate body keeps the instance of immortality.

Notably, this means Alexander Clay can kill himself by committing suicide after moving himself into a mortal body via the "Soul" potion.

NOTES ON PLAYER POWERS:



Edgar's Mice: Of the potions, only "Death" and "Life" have any perceivable effect on the mice.

A mouse fed any amount of the Death potion will die immediately (not in forty minutes as a human would). This is true even if the mouse is possessed of a single instance of immortality.

If a mouse is fed the "Life" potion, it becomes immortal. This effect will not be immediately clear to players, but should be made obvious if a player character attempts to, e.g., injure or kill a mouse which has been fed the immortality potion (the mouse will heal quickly from injuries and never die). If the mouse is possessed of multiple instances of immortality, these instances are "stripped" via the Death potion as per the immortality rules for humans..

Edgar's Homunculus: Though Edgar constructed the stitched-together body he's brought into the cave specifically for Lily, a user of the Soul potion can in fact seat any soul in it. This includes the soul of Stephan, Alexander's dead lover, and the soul of any of the player characters.

If the soul of a living person is moved into Edgar's homunculus (or into any other body), their current body becomes inanimate immediately, and acts for all intents and purposes like a corpse.

Whatever else is true of its appearance, Edgar's homunculus has the classic visual signs of a Frankenstein monster -- it is patched-together, scarred, and obviously unnatural. Other details of the body's appearance may be left to the discretion of Edgar's player.

Alexander's Potion-Switching Power: Alexander may switch any vial with any other extant vial, including vials that are empty, vials that are in his possession, or vials that are held by other players. Victims cannot "feel" the switch and are, under all circumstances, fooled for several seconds; they should not be allowed to "interrupt" or otherwise invalidate his use of this power. However, the switch will always come to light a few seconds after it's made. Therefore it behooves Alexander's player to switch vials a moment before his intended victim drinks.

Alexander's Immortality: Alexander's immortality works identically to an instance of immortality provided by the "Life" potion -- though neither Alexander nor any of the other player characters know how he acquired his particular instance of this power.

Vesper's Pocket-Watch: In the cave, Vesper should be the only character with a means of keeping time (if, e.g, Alexander or Edgar are wearing watches, they should be asked to remove them before the game begins). Moreover, Vesper, though her pocket watch may be visible, need not share the time with other players. Thus, the power of Vesper's watch is, in fact, twofold; not only can she slow time to a small extent in the cave, but she can (perhaps more powerfully) conceal the true time in the cave from others.

Vesper's Favorite Color: Vesper's favorite color should be whatever color the "Sight" potion is. The written materials describe that color as red; however, if for some reason a red drink can't be procured for the game, changing her favorite color to a color you do have on hand is encouraged. In the original runs of this game, Vesper's favorite color was purple.

A NOTE ON STEPHAN MCMAHON:

C. S. C. S.

There's a chance that during the game, Alexander Clay's lover Stephan McMahon will be resurrected and placed in one of the bodies present in the cave.

If Stephan McMahon is resurrected and becomes a character in the game, it's suggested the Orchestrator step in and play Stephan, guided by Stephan's character sheet. The Orchestrator may also choose to keep a fourth player on hand to play Stephan, but it should be kept in mind that Stephan's resurrection is far from guaranteed.

ENDGAME:



An hour after game start (or an hour and five minutes after game start, if Vesper Von Eternity chooses to activate her pocket watch power), you should call for Endgame and announce that the cave collapses. Anyone left in the cave after its collapse dies, unless they are immortal. If an immortal is trapped in the cave when it collapses, they are simply inconvenienced by being smushed under the rock.

OPTIONAL GAME-LENGTHENING TECHNIQUE:



With certain casts, it's possible that all or most of the potions may be consumed or expended before the narrative resolves to anyone's satisfaction. In those cases, the Author recommends the Orchestrator add two or three further "Gift" potions to the spread, allowing players to replenish some of the potions they've expended and reignite character dilemmas. The extra "Gift" potions so suggested may be added pre-game into the initial setup, or provided by the Orchestrator partway through play as a result of an otherwise-unexplained "magical event."

All particulars of such additions or events are of course left wholly to the discretion of the Orchestrator.

AN ORCHESTRATOR'S POWERS:



The rule set for Drink Me is (deliberately) quite sparse. This gives the Orchestrator a lot of power in certain situations -- namely, when the PCs do anything that isn't covered by the rules at hand. If the PCs, for example, get into a physical fight, ask for extraneous gear, etc., you have total control of how that plays out or ends. Keep this in mind while running the game!



PAIN

Choose a body within line of sight as your target. Simply by willing it, you may now cause that body's bearer incredible pain. The terrible pain you cause will cripple the bearer for up to ten seconds; he or she will be unable to speak while in pain, and will be unable to drink potions or stop other player characters from drinking potions. You may cause your target excruciating pain a maximum of once per thirty seconds; you may continue to effectively cause pain even when your target is out of sight. Your ability to produce this effect ends only when you, or your target, dies.

SOUL

Choose a soul that exists anywhere in Heaven, Hell, or Earth as your target. You may now seat this soul in a body of your choice that is within line of sight.

LIFE

You are now immortal. You cannot sicken, age, or die from violence unless an effect specifically says that it kills you in spite of immortality. If you were already immortal, you now possess an additional "instance" of immortality.

DEATH

In exactly forty minutes, you will perish. This is true even if you are currently immortal. If you are currently possessed of multiple instances of immortality, you immediately lose one of them; the others remain unaffected.

SIGHT

Choose two vials, empty or full. You now know the effect of the potions that are or were contained within each vial so chosen. However, you feel an irresistible compulsion to identify and announce the effects of those two potions to everyone else in your presence.

GIFT

Pick an empty vial. You may now refill that vial with the potion it previously contained.

WHITE MOUSE

WHITE MOUSE

WHITE MOUSE

GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

DYSTOPIA BY VIVIAN ABRAHAM

As four teenagers in a dystopian future, you have lived your lives in fear and ignorance. Now, on the day on which the authority will determine your fate, you have decided that it is time to start making your own choices. But in a world where the truth is hidden, can you trust each other?

Dystopia

Instructions

This is a game for four players. Each of you will take on the role of a teenager, growing up in a future society. Like those futures described in books such as *The Hunger Games*, *Uglies*, and *Divergent*, people in this society are not free to choose their own path. A threatening authority controls the citizens. The truth is always hidden. As four teenagers in this world, you will struggle to change your future for the better. Through your decisions together, you will tell a story about these four teenagers.

Here's what you will need:

- First, you will need to print out this document. It must be printed out *double sided*. You will only need one printed copy. You may want to clip it at the top to keep the pages in order. You do not need to read through the document before playing. All the rules will be explained as you play the game.
- Second, you will need four players total, including yourself. Because of the serious themes of this game, players should be at least thirteen years old.
- Third, you will need a place and time to play. This game will take about two hours to play through. It can be played sitting on the ground outside or sitting around a table. You will need a space quiet enough so that everyone can hear each other clearly and enough light to be able to read this document.
- Fourth, you will need scissors that each player can use and some method of keeping track of time.

This is a game that anyone can play. It has themes of fighting against an authority, seeking personal freedoms, and becoming an adult. Any of the instructions above can be altered so that everyone can play the game. If a person cannot read the printed text of this document, it can be read aloud by an electronic device or another player. If a player wants to translate this document into another language, or sign the contents as play progresses, they are encouraged to do so. If a player needs to take a break in the two hour playing time, they are encouraged to take one. If a player cannot use the scissors, the portions of the document that require it can be cut in advance, or by another player.

A major part of this game involves touch between players, specifically holding each other's hands. If this is uncomfortable, impractical, or difficult in any way, for any player, handholding can be simulated through another physical or non-physical method.

Themes of this game can be troubling. However, they should never become harmful to the players. If the game ever reaches a point where continuing to play would be harmful to them, that player should say, "CUT". At that point, all players should stop game play immediately. Either the game can end there, or it can continue after discussion of how the game can be played safely for that person.

When you are all gathered and ready to play, each player should read this first page. When everyone has done so, the person who printed the document should pass it to the person on their left. That person should read aloud, starting with page 2.

Introduction (read this aloud)

There are three things you will do in this game: tell a story, roleplay your character, and participate in Challenges. The storytelling and roleplaying parts of this game are cooperative. The goal is to make a compelling story and create interesting characters. The Challenge part of this game can be both cooperative and competitive. Your character may have goals that conflict with the goals of another character. But your characters may also have to work together to accomplish those goals. The conflict and cooperation between your characters becomes a part of the story you are telling together. Pass this document to the player to your left and have them read the next section aloud.

Storytelling and Roleplaying (read this aloud)

If you have played story games or roleplaying games before, this game may be familiar to you. In this game, there is no moderator; all players participate equally in the story. Here are some guidelines for how to tell the story and roleplay your character.

Describing: When you see an instruction that asks you to describe something, you can imagine and describe anything you want. Remember that this game is about a dark, hostile future. Try to keep your descriptions to something that fits into this world well. You can describe things that are happening in the world to your character and the other characters. But don't tell another player what their character does or says.

Explaining: When you see an instruction that asks you to *explain* something, you should talk about your character's thoughts and motivations, so the other players can understand your actions. The other characters do not necessarily know what your character is thinking, but the other players should know so that they can help to build the story.

Asking: When you see an instruction that directs you to ask the other player something, give each player a turn to explain how their character reacts and feels to what has happened.

Speaking: Before, after, and during a Challenge, your character can always speak to other characters in the game. Speaking is like pretending you are in a movie and acting out the role of your character, saying the lines that they would say.

Place this piece of paper so that page two is face up in the center of the circle of players. Pass the remainder of this document to the player to your left and have them read the next section aloud.

Challenges (read this aloud)

Your characters will face four Challenges during this game. Each Challenge will ask you to decide how much your character trusts the other characters in the game. Each Challenge may result in a betrayal of that trust. When a challenge begins, all players must close their eyes. You may *speak* as your character with your eyes closed if you want. Everyone should mentally count to fifteen. During this time, you will decide to do one of the following:

- Extend both hands into the center of the circle of players. You trust them completely.
- Extend one hand into the center of the circle of players, and keep one behind your back. You trust them, but there are some things that you need to keep to yourself.
- Keep both hands beyond your back. You do not trust the players, or even if you
 do, you cannot risk being betrayed.

During the course of this game, things may happen that prevent you from choosing one of these options. You may even be limited to only one option. You must seek to overcome the obstacles that your character has encountered if you want the freedom to choose for yourself who to trust and who not to trust.

After a count of fifteen, everyone should open their eyes. If you have a hand in front of you, you must agree with another player to take their hand. You cannot take your own hand, if you have both extended. You cannot take the hand of a player against their will. You can *speak* as your character during this time.

Pass the document to the player on your left to read aloud.

Interpreting the Results of a Challenge (read this aloud)

If, at the end of a challenge, you have both hands behind your back, your character has decided to go it alone. You have not reached out, so you cannot be betrayed.

If you have extended one hand, and it has been taken, you have formed an alliance or a friendship. You and another person may be able to accomplish more working together, even though your goals may not be the same.

If you have extended both hands, and the same person took both of them, you have a strong relationship with that person. You can trust that person to have your back no matter what in the obstacles to come.

If you have extended both hands, and had both of them taken by different people, you have formed a team. Your participation in this team is vital, without you they would fall apart. That responsibility may be difficult to handle, but you have to be strong for their sake.

If you have extended a hand, and it has not been taken, you have been let down or betrayed in some way. This may make it harder for you to trust the other characters later on.

You can try a practice Challenge if you want to get a feel for how it works. This is the last page of instructions. When you are ready to begin playing the game. Place this piece of paper so that page three is face up in the center of the circle of players. Pass the remainder of this document to the player to your left.

The First Challenge

Ask the other players to close their eyes. Read the following aloud:

There was never a time in your life that you felt completely safe and secure. All around you, adult conversations stopped when you drew near. When they spoke to you, they told you that things were good, even wonderful. Everything was going according to plan. The adults in charge were confident, and they knew what was best for you. But when they spoke with each other, you could hear the fear in their voices.

Imagine that you have grown up like this, surrounded by the whispers of fear never spoken loudly enough for you to hear. Imagine the time when you first consciously realized that things were not wonderful. Imagine the time when you first realized that you were not a child anymore, to be kept in the dark. Imagine the time when you first realized that you needed to know what was really going on, and that you needed to have the power to change it. You are fifteen years old.

Ask the other players to open their eyes.

Ask: What is your name? Ask: What do you look like?

When each player, including yourself, has answered these questions about their character, take the next piece of paper (pages seven and eight) and cut them into quarters along the dotted lines. Pass a quarter to each player, keeping one for yourself. You can look at the papers and choose who to pass them to if you want. Ask the players to read to themselves just the front side of each page.

When everyone has done this, read the following aloud:

You have been assigned a place in society. You are there because you were born there; your placement was determined at birth. Maybe it was because of who your parents were, or maybe some other reason. You are supposed to stay with your own kind, but you have broken this rule. Each of you are from a different place, but you have all met each other.

Ask: What is your place in society?

Ask: How do you fit in?
Ask: How do you not fit in?

Ask: What would you change if you could?

Then pass this document to the person to your left.

Sheet One Front

Elite. You are an Elite in your society. You have been given access to the best society has to offer: the best education, the best food and housing, the best luxuries. However, you know that your society is unjust.

- -- If you choose to continue to use the benefits of your Elite status, keep this sheet face up until the end of the game. At the end of the game, *explain* why you did so. *Ask* the other players how they feel about this.
- -- If you choose to try to throw down the system that makes you an Elite, you must make a plan with the other players for how you will accomplish this together. If in the next Challenge you reach out with both hands, and different players take both hands, turn over this sheet of paper.

Sheet One Front

Soldier. You have been trained to fight and kill since a very young age. Your place in society is to defend the authorities and keep all citizens in line. At some point in the past, your duties forced you to do something that has haunted you ever since.

- -- You must keep your right hand behind your back while this page is face up.
- -- Choose whether or not to confess your guilt over your past actions to another character. If you choose to try to do so, in the next Challenge, extend your left hand. You can do this even if another page says that you cannot. If that player takes your hand, flip this page over.
- -- If you choose not to do so, keep this page face up for the rest of the game. *Explain* why you made that decision.

Sheet One Front

Servant. You are from the lowest class possible in your society. You have the least freedom of any other character. You and your family have suffered the most hardship. You have the most to lose from acting against the authorities.

- -- Choose how you will seek freedom for yourself and your family. If you choose to try to free yourself, keep both hands behind your back in the next Challenge. After that Challenge is over, flip this page to the other side.
- -- If you choose to seek the aid of others to free you, put both hands forward in the next Challenge. If both hands are taken, flip this page to the other side.

Sheet One Front

Keeper. The group that you belong to has access to more knowledge than any other group except the authorities. You are trusted with this knowledge, but there is a terrible price to pay if you reveal it to anyone.

- -- Every time you extend a hand, you are giving information to a character in violation of the rules. As long as your hand is taken, keep this paper in front of you. If at any time someone fails to take your hand, flip this paper over.
- --At the end of the game, describe how you keep the remaining secrets safe.

Sheet One Reverse

Revolutionary. You are now being actively pursued by Government forces for crimes against your former Elite group.

- -- When you reveal this page, *describe* how successful your plan was. *Ask* the players who took your hand what their part in the plan was. *Explain* how you feel about leaving behind your Elite status.
- -- At the end of the game, *describe* the benefits of your actions to society. *Describe* the inadvertent harm of your actions to society. *Explain* whether you would act this way again. *Ask* the other players whether they would still follow your plan, if they had it to do over again.

Sheet One Reverse

Veteran. You have found someone you can unburden your thoughts to. You realize that you were as much a victim of unjust laws as the people you harmed enforcing those laws.

- -- Describe what it was that you did that you feel guilty about. Explain how you feel having told someone else about what happened. Ask them for forgiveness. You no longer must keep your right hand behind you, but are free to do so if you want.
- -- At the end of the game, *explain* how your experiences have changed how you feel about violence and fighting. *Describe* your efforts to find a new path in life. *Ask* the person you trusted if they still feel the same way about your character.

Sheet One Reverse

Empowered. You have broken free of the system, and are now on the run. But even though your every move is filled with danger, you feel free for the first time in your life.

- -- If you freed yourself, *describe* how you did so. *Explain* to the other players why it was important that you did this without their aid. *Ask* them if they would do the same in your place.
- -- If you freed yourself with the help of the other players, *ask* them to *describe* how they did so. *Explain* how this has changed the way you feel about them.
- -- At the end of the game, *describe* whether what you have accomplished has affected all citizens equally. *Describe* how your family, in particular, was affected by these changes. *Explain* what more you believe needs to be done.

Sheet One Reverse

Traitor. Everyone knows that you have betrayed the trust you were given and you told secrets. The authorities will hunt you mercilessly for this, knowing that all your other secrets could fall into the hands of those who fight the authorities.

- -- Describe the secrets that you revealed. Ask the other players to describe how the authorities found out about it. Explain whether you would make the same choice again.
- -- At the end of the game, *describe* how all of the secrets you once held have now been revealed. *Explain* whether you would have preferred that some knowledge never have come to light.

Take the next piece of paper (pages eleven and twelve) and cut them into quarters along the dotted lines. Pass a quarter to each player, keeping one for yourself. You can look at the papers and choose who to pass them to if you want. Ask the players to read just the front side of each page.

When everyone has done this, read the following.

On a certain day, all of your lives will change forever. You will become adults. Maybe your places in society will change, for better or for worse. However, no matter what happens, you don't have a choice. Other people will make this decision for you. That day is coming soon. You have gathered together, in secret, to talk about what will happen.

Describe the place where you have all gathered. Describe what you hear, what you see, what you smell. Describe how you managed to gather together here, in secret.

Ask: What are you hopeful for? Ask: What are you fearful for?

Ask: How are you planning for that day?

Ask: How can we take control of our fate?

Encourage each player to *speak* in character and *describe* their plan for what they will do on that day. Keep track of time, and when about ten minutes have passed in talking, or when everyone seems to be ready to continue, say the following:

It is time to begin the challenge.

Proceed with the challenge as described on page 3. Each player should feel free to read page 3 over before starting if they have any questions about how the challenge works. After the challenge is over, some players may be able to turn over one or both of the papers in front of them to show the reverse side. When they do so, ask them to follow the instructions on that side.

When everyone has followed the instructions on any paper they have flipped, pass this document to the player to your left.

Sheet Two Front

Fearful. You are terrified of what is going to happen on that day. Other people have tried to tell you it will be all right, but you know something awful is going to happen. You are never going to be able to meet their expectations.

- -- If you do nothing to change it, this fear will stay with you for the rest of the game. At the end of the game, *describe* how your fears have kept you from doing what you wanted to do. *Ask* the other players how they overcame their own fears.
- -- If you extend both hands in a Challenge, and both hands are taken, turn this sheet of paper over.

Sheet Two Front

Trusting. You may be a bit nervous as the day approaches, but you feel confident that you will get through it. You don't believe that any test would be impossible. And you know that you can rely on your friends for help if you need it.

- -- You must reach out with at least your left hand for each Challenge while this page is face up.
- -- If every time you extend a hand, it is taken, then this page will stay face up. If it is still face up at the end of the game, *explain* how your faith and trust in your friends makes you feel. *Ask* the other players if they feel the same way.
- -- If you ever extend a hand that is not taken, turn this sheet of paper over.

Sheet Two Front

Guardian. You aren't concerned about your fate on that day, because you are too concerned with what might happen to someone else, a person who is not one of the other three characters in this game. No matter what happens to you, you must keep that person safe.

- -- You must choose to keep your left hand behind you, in order to keep this page face up.
- -- If this page is still face up at the end of the game, *describe* how you were able to keep your loved one safe throughout the chaotic events. *Explain* whether you feel that the sacrifices you made, and caused your friends to make, were worth it.
- -- If you ever choose extend your left hand, turn this sheet of paper over.

Sheet Two Front

Cynical. You are fairly certain that the day coming up is going to be a disaster. You are just trying to get past it. You know that you will do whatever it takes to survive, and you hope that you don't let anyone down as a result.

- -- You must keep your left hand behind you while you have this page face up.
- -- If this page is still face up at the end of the game, *describe* the problems that have not been solved by your and your friends' actions. *Explain* whether you feel that these problems will ever be solved. *Ask* the other characters what keeps them going, despite all that has been lost.
- -- If you ever witness two characters take both of each other's hands, turn this sheet of paper over.

Sheet Two Reverse

Courageous. You have overcome your fears in order to act. You are still scared, and sometimes you feel that you will never win against the authorities. But, despite your fear, you will keep trying.

- -- When you reveal this page, *explain* how you found the courage to act. *Describe* what you were able to accomplish as a result.
- -- At the end of the game, *describe* the character that inspired you the most to face your fears and continue to fight.

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Sheet Two Reverse

Hardened. Sometimes being too trusting can be a liability. You had to learn this the hard way. You hope that it has not made it impossible for you to trust again.

- -- When you reveal this page, *explain* how you felt when no one took your hand. *Describe* what happened as a result, and what harm you suffered.
- -- At the end of the game, *explain* how the events have changed your character. *Describe* what has given you the possibility of trusting again.

Sheet Two Reverse

Survivor. This was the hardest lesson to learn and the greatest sacrifice you have had to make. You couldn't keep everyone safe, and you choose to fight with your friends, rather than let the authority hold your loved one hostage to stop you.

- -- When you reveal this page, *describe* what harm came to the person you were protecting because you were doing something else. *Explain* why you had to make that decision. *Ask* the other players whether you did the right thing.
- -- At the end of the game, *describe* whether your loved one made it through alive. If you aren't sure, *describe* what your character is doing to try to discover their fate. *Explain* how your decision changed the way that you look at the world.

Sheet Two Reverse

Hopeful. You had never seen real trust before, but the two characters you witnessed have inspired you. Where before, you could never see a way out of this, now you think it just might be possible.

- -- When you reveal this page, *explain* how you felt when you saw those two characters trust each other. *Ask* them where they found the courage to have that trust.
- -- At the end of the game, *describe* the work that remains to be done after everything is over. *Describe* how your character is tackling that work head on, despite the difficulties.

The Second Challenge

Take the next piece of paper (pages fifteen and sixteen) and cut them into quarters along the dotted lines. Pass a quarter to each player, keeping one for yourself. You can look at the papers and choose who to pass them to if you want. Ask the players to read just the front side of each page.

When everyone has done this, read the following.

You have passed the first Challenge. Maybe you have taken the first step toward change. Maybe you have just begun to realize how hard change will be to accomplish. But either through success or failure, you have become closer to each other. Friendships have been started, or perhaps something even closer. In this world, love is dangerous, especially love between groups that are meant to be separate. Dangerous for you, if you are found out. But also dangerous for the authorities, because your love can inspire bravery beyond what you thought was possible.

Describe how much time has passed since the First Challenge. Describe what has happened in that time. Describe how the authorities have reacted to what happened. Describe how you managed, despite heightened danger, to once again gather together in secret.

Ask: Who do you love?

Ask: How has your love for another been used against you in the past?

Ask: How could love ruin your life?

Ask: How could love save it?

Encourage each player to *speak* in character and *describe* their plan for what they will do next. Keep track of time, and when about ten minutes have passed in talking, or when everyone seems to be ready to continue, say the following:

It is time to begin the challenge.

Proceed with the challenge as described on page 3. After the challenge is over, some players may be able to turn over some of the papers in front of them to show the reverse side. When they do so, ask them to follow the instructions on that side.

When everyone has followed the instructions on any paper they have flipped, pass this document to the player to your left.

Sheet Three Front

Romantic. You feel strongly about another character in the game. Is it love? You weren't sure at first, but you know that you trust them beyond reason. Maybe you were destined to be together. It is up to you whether you tell them how you feel.

- -- Whenever you extend a hand, ask that character to take it. If they take your hand every time, then keep this page face up. If it is still face up at the end of the game, *describe* the moment where you finally tell them how you really feel, or if you already have, *describe* your affirmation of these feelings when everything is over. *Ask* them whether they feel the same way about your character.
- -- If any point in time you have a hand extended and that character does not take it, flip this page over.

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Sheet Three Front

Loyal. The kind of love that is most important to you is the strong friendship and trust that you have in the other characters in this game. Whether or not you feel romantically toward them, you know that it is only by sticking together that you will survive the events to come. You would do anything for them.

- -- If you have agreed to take a character's hand before the Challenge begins, you must take it. If they have agreed to take your hand, and they do so, keep this page face up. If this page is still face up at the end of the game, *explain* how you feel about the friendships that you have with the other characters.
- -- If any point in time another character has agreed to take your hand and then does not, flip this page over.

Sheet Three Front

Searching. How do you even know when you are in love? For your entire life, you have lived without the freedom to truly express yourself. And while you hope that love waits for you someday, it is hard to keep that hope alive, that someday you will have the freedom to pursue a relationship.

- -- Keep this page face up until you reach out with both hands, and have both hands taken by the same person. If this page is still face up at the end of the game, *describe* how your search has continued after the events of the game are over. *Explain* whether you have more hope that you can find love now, because of what you and the other characters have accomplished.
- -- If another character takes both of your hands, flip this page over.

Sheet Three Front

Independent. You don't want to define yourself around who you care about and your relationships. You want to find out who you are as a person first. Maybe after all this is over, there will be time for love, but for now, you need to keep focused on the task at hand.

- -- Keep this page face up until you reach out with both hands, and have both hands taken by the same person. If this page is still face up at the end of the game, *explain* what you feel you have learned about yourself during this journey. *Ask* the other players whether they felt you were a person they could rely upon. *Describe* a time where you felt the most lonely and what you did about it.
- -- If another character takes both of your hands, flip this page over.

Sheet Three Reverse

Heartbroken. Your love was not to be. Some days you tell yourself you saw it coming, and knew that it would happen, but you still cannot make your heart hurt any less.

- -- When you reveal this page, *explain* how you felt when your loved one did not take your hand. *Describe* what you do to cope with those feelings.
- -- At the end of the game, *describe* how your character has found love again. *Explain* how you feel about the person you first fell in love with. *Ask* them how they feel about you.

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Sheet Three Reverse

Disillusioned. You don't necessarily blame anyone for how things worked out. After all, you still share a goal. It is your struggle against the authorities that is keeping them from being entirely trusting. But at the same time, you feel as though something inside you has broken that may never be fixed.

- -- When you reveal this page, *explain* how you have been changed after this challenge. *Describe* how it has changed the way that others may perceive you.
- -- At the end of the game, *describe* a time when your character has to go off alone, without the rest of the group. *Explain* why you needed this time. *Ask* the other players if they ever come looking for you. *Describe* whether they ever see you again.

Sheet Three Reverse

United. If only for a moment, you feel as though you truly understood another person and they truly understood you. Who knows whether your love will last? Maybe for just that moment, and then it is gone. But now you understand what it was that you had been looking for all this time.

- -- When you reveal this page, *explain* how you felt when the other player took both of your hands. *Ask* them how they feel about you.
- -- At the end of the game, *ask* the other player you shared hands with whether they still feel the same way about you. *Explain* what sharing that moment with them has meant to you throughout your struggles.

Sheet Three Reverse

Reliant. Sometimes the greatest strength lies in relying upon friends you can trust. You know that you *can* stand on your own, but what you have learned is that you don't always *have* to.

- -- When you reveal this page, *ask* another character for help with something. *Describe* how their help allows you to achieve something you could have never done on your own.
- -- At the end of the game, *explain* what your friends have meant to you throughout these times. *Ask* them what you can do to help them achieve their goals. *Describe* how you are able to do so.

The Third Challenge

Take the next piece of paper (pages nineteen and twenty) and cut them into quarters along the dotted lines. Pass a quarter to each player, keeping one for yourself. You can look at the papers and choose who to pass them to if you want. Ask the players to read just the front side of each page.

When everyone has done this, read the following.

You have passed the Second Challenge. You are now far enough down this path, that there is no turning back. The authorities are aware of your resistance. You have now begun to place others in danger, your families and loved ones. But the authorities have confidence that they can deal with the threat you have created. After all, they have had control over you since you were born. They have controlled your education. They have controlled everything that has happened in your life. Even your body is not your own property.

Describe how you have survived since the Second Challenge. Describe the sacrifices you have been forced to make. Describe the dangers you have faced. Describe how you have come to be able to rest, if only for a short time, and discuss what you must do next.

Ask: What control has been placed over your body?

Ask: What have the authorities told you about why it was done?

Ask: What did you not want?

Ask: What changes do you wish you could make?

Encourage each player to *speak* in character and *describe* their plan for what they will do next. Keep track of time, and when about ten minutes have passed in talking, or when everyone seems to be ready to continue, say the following:

It is time to begin the challenge.

Proceed with the challenge as described on page 3. After the challenge is over, some players may be able to turn over some of the papers in front of them to show the reverse side. When they do so, ask them to follow the instructions on that side.

When everyone has followed the instructions on any paper they have flipped, pass this document to the player to your left.

Sheet Four Front

Sheltered. You were never allowed to come to any real harm as a young child. The authorities placed a shell around you. They said it was there to protect you and keep you safe. But because of it, you never got to stretch your body to its full potential. You always felt that your true strength and expression were confined.

- -- If every hand you extend is taken, then leave this page face up for the rest of the game. At the end of the game *explain* whether you feel lucky to have gotten through relatively unscathed. *Ask* the other characters how the harm they took helped them to grow.
- -- If you have a hand extended and it is not taken, flip this page over.

Sheet Four Front

Enhanced. Your body was changed in ways to make it a better tool for the authorities, and to make you fit better into your assigned role. You didn't ask for these changes, and sometimes your abilities scare you. You wonder whether the authorities can take them away just as easily.

- -- If only one person at a time takes the hand or hands that you extend, keep this page face up. If this page is still face up at the end of the game, *describe* whether you keep your body the way it is, or how you try to undo the changes that have been made. *Explain* the reason for your choice.
- -- If you extend both hands, and both are taken by different people, flip this page over.

Sheet Four Fron

Conformed. You look like you fit in perfectly. After all, you have been changed to look just right, just what is expected. You have no distinguishing features. There is nothing about your body that says it is your own.

- -- If you choose to always keep at least one hand behind your back, keep this page face up. If this page is still face up at the end of the game, *describe* how your ability to blend in has been useful. *Explain* whether you still wish to change your appearance, and if so, *describe* how you do this.
- -- If another character takes both of your hands, flip this page over.

Sheet Four Front

Marked. Your body has a mark on it that tells the authorities you are someone to be watched. Because of this mark, it is easier for them to find and control you. You try to hide the mark, but even the act of covering it up is seen as suspicious. There is no way to remove it that you know of.

- -- If every hand you extend is taken, then leave this page face up for the rest of the game. At the end of the game *describe* how you were able to keep yourself hidden with the help of your friends. *Explain* how you felt, knowing that you were putting them at greater risk.
- -- If you extend a hand and it is not taken, flip this page over.

Sheet Four Reverse

Scarred. You know that when people pass you by these days, you remind them of darker times. Sometimes your appearance scares people. But you wear these scars with pride. You made your own choices and you survived.

- -- When you reveal this page, *describe* what happened to you as a result of your hand not being taken in the last challenge. *Explain* why it was your own decision to take the risk.
- -- At the end of the game, *explain* how you feel about these scars and what they have taught you about yourself. *Ask* the other characters what they think when they see your scars.

Sheet Four Reverse

Burned Out. You have stretched the limits of your artificial abilities to protect your friends. Now something inside you feels broken. Your body doesn't work the way it should.

- -- When you reveal this page, *describe* how your enhancements were critical to accomplishing your team's goals. *Describe* what happened to you as a result.
- -- At the end of the game, *explain* how you feel about your body now that you have gotten used to what has happened. *Ask* the other players if they think of you differently.

Sheet Four Reverse

Unbound. Once you were on the run, it didn't matter what you looked like. The authorities could track you down anyway, so you decided to reclaim your appearance. Now you look on the outside like the person you feel you are on the inside.

- -- When you reveal this page, *describe* what you have done to change your body to match the person you are. *Explain* why this was so important to you.
- -- At the end of the game, *describe* ways in which other people have decided to emulate your new appearance. *Explain* how you feel when you see someone who has done this.

Sheet Four Reverse

Betrayed. You always knew they would find you. Because of your mark, the authorities have found out who you are and what you have been doing. You have placed the mission at risk, and you aren't sure that you have the strength to run any longer.

- -- When you reveal this page, *describe* how you were discovered and what happened to you as a result. *Ask* the other characters whether they think it is worth the risk to try to help you. *Explain* your relief in knowing, at least, that the waiting is over.
- -- At the end of the game, *describe* whether you continue to wear your mark openly, or whether you hide it. *Explain* why you decided to do this.

The Fourth Challenge

Take the next piece of paper (pages twenty-three and twenty-four) and cut them into quarters along the dotted lines. Pass a quarter to each player, keeping one for yourself. Ask the players to read just the front side of each page. Note that all of these pages are the same.

When everyone has done this, read the following.

You have passed the Third Challenge, but not without great cost. No one you know had been told the whole truth about how things work. Now you have uncovered a small piece of that truth. And the remainder, once uncovered, will change your entire world. You have started to ask the questions that were too dangerous to even think about before. You have been hunted and tormented, but the need for answers drives you on.

Describe how your society has fallen into chaos since the Third Challenge. Describe what you have heard is happening in other parts of the world. Describe how the authorities are reacting and their desperation. Describe how you have come together to put an end, finally, to the lies and reveal the truth to all.

Ask: What special mission have you undertaken since the Third Challenge?

Ask: What have you found out as a result of that mission?

Ask: Who do you think might have the remaining answers you seek?

Ask: What might revealing these answers mean for your world?

Encourage each player to *speak* in character and *describe* their plan for what they will do next. Keep track of time, and when about ten minutes have passed in talking, or when everyone seems to be ready to continue, say the following:

It is time to begin the challenge.

Proceed with the challenge as described on page 3. After the challenge is over, some players may be able to turn over some of the papers in front of them to show the reverse side.

Pass the last page of document to the player to your left.

Sheet Five Front

Beginnings. It's hard to believe that so little time has passed since that first day when you decided to change your world. Has what you have done really made a difference? Or will it be one more story to be told in hushed whispers by fearful adults. Will children ever be told who you are, what you have done here? Or will it be forgotten?

-- In the last challenge, if at least one of your hands is taken AND if you have turned over at least two of your pages to the reverse side, flip this page over. -- If these two conditions are not met, then at the end of the game *explain* what your character wants to do next. *Ask* the other players whether they will help. *Describe* how you begin on your next journey.

Sheet Five Fron

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Sheet Five Reverse

Endings. It's hard to believe that it's all over. Of course, there is so much more work to do. But you can finally look back on everything that has happened and know that you made a difference, even when it was at great personal cost. Now all you want to do is rest, but you keep thinking to yourself: We did this. What more could we accomplish?

-- At the end of the game *describe* how the world has changed due to your efforts. *Describe* what was lost along the way. *Explain* whether you wish to continue to journey. *Ask* your friends if they will come with you.

Sheet Five Reverse

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Endgame

Read the following aloud.

For your entire life, you have been surrounded by whispers of fear. Now, for the first time, all you can hear are whispers of hope. When people talk, they are excited. When people laugh they don't look over their shoulders. When people cry, there are others there to comfort them. You are sixteen years old. And the world will never be the same.

Beginning with Sheet One, ask each player to follow the directions labeled "at the end of the game" that are listed on their sheet. When everyone has had a turn, do the same for Sheet Two, Sheet Three, Sheet Four, and finally Sheet Five.

You have reached the end of this story. And the beginning of the next one.

Written by Vivian Abraham

Editorial Assistance from Christopher Amherst and Daniel Abraham

Playtesting Assistance from Daniel Abraham, Galen Brownsmith, and Heather Tebbs.

EXCLUSIVE LISTING

BY JESSE COOMBS

Exclusive Listing is a heartbreaking game of buried feelings. We see scene of a couples imagined life that never will be.

Exclusive Listing

A game about not breaking up by Jesse Coombs

"Hope is the last thing a person does before they are defeated."

-Henry Rollins

This is a game about a couple buying a house. It requires 4 players. Two players will play as the couple, one player will play as their real estate broker, and the final player will be known as the *hope* player. The *hope* player will portray various roles and also create scenes for the other players to roleplay their characters in.

The game will last no longer than 2 hours and usually no shorter than an hour, but that may vary. The *hope* player needs a way to keep track of time. Everyone will also need access to a room or space that the players can pretend are the various rooms of a couple's future home. Multiple locations are good, but not required as long as everyone is able to imagine a different location using the same space.

To begin, everyone who is playing will need to pick a role, as listed below. Each role has a different way to win the game.

The couple

Two players will play the two halves of a couple. Their characters can be married or dating, but they must be in a serious relationship. The genders, backgrounds, and names of the couple can be anything that both players agree upon and are comfortable roleplaying.

Both players should also be comfortable with each other before play begins. These are not roles to be taken lightly.

The couple are in every scene of the game. To win, you must get the real estate broker to shake your hand.

If you are interested in really getting into the head of your character, you should play as a member of the couple.

The real estate broker

One player will play as the real estate broker. The broker has known the couple for some amount of time; they've already met at least a few times. This player will choose the name and appearance of the broker.

The broker's job is to show the couple around the space, describing the features, hoping for a sale. Be descriptive!

The broker will not be in the *dream sequence* scenes. To win, the broker must shake the hand of the person in the couple who is not *heartbroken*.

If you are interested in a slightly more tactical game, and enjoy taking charge without getting personal, you should play as the broker.

Hope

One player will play as the *hope* player. This is less of a role, and more of a symbol. You will play as various different characters who will probably have some connection to the couple and who may not exist.

The *hope* player has the responsibility of describing new houses on the market, framing *dream sequence* scenes, and playing *dream sequence* characters.

The *hope* player does not take part when the broker is showing the house. The *hope* player wins if the timer reaches 90 minutes before the broker shakes hands with someone in the couple.

If you love being creative and entertaining others, you should play as *hope*.

Playing the game

After roles have been picked, the couple must go somewhere private and decide which one of them is *heartbroken*. They both must keep this secret from the other players and anyone who may be watching the game as well.

The *heartbroken* member of the couple wants and probably needs to break up with their partner, but is afraid to do so. The *heartbroken* has felt this way for a while. The other member of the couple is, for the most part, clueless about this. "Hey, we've always had some issues, but who doesn't?" The characters in the couple do not have the knowledge that the players do.

After the couple has secretly chosen who is *heartbroken*, they briefly describe their characters, relationship, and past to the other players. The broker, in turn, describes what this real estate broker looks like and their name. The broker does not reveal anything else.

The *hope* player then sets a timer for 90 minutes and play begins with *showing a property*.

Scenes

There are two types of scenes, *showing a property* and *dream sequences*.

Showing a property

Showing a property is the first scene of the game. First, the hope player describes what type of property just came on the market; whether it's a house, an apartment, or something else where people could live. They also briefly describe the type of neighborhood it's in, making sure not to contradict any fiction that has already been established.

When framing any scene, it is a great time for all players to ask any clarifying questions, remembering to keep the *heartbroken* a secret. Don't take too long framing a scene and don't describe anything inside of the home. That's the broker's job. If everyone seems to be nodding their heads, roleplaying should begin.

When playing a *showing a property* scene, the broker is trying to sell the unit, describing everything and answering questions. The broker should also ask gentle probing questions as to better find the right fit for the couple.

The couple should feel free to point out stuff in the house and describe things as well, but the broker has the fictional authority on the space if confusion occurs.

At any time, the broker may "go for the hard sell" or "show another place". If they go for the sell, the broker straight up offers their hand to one member of the couple. They must shake hands and the game is over. At this time, the *heartbroken* must be revealed. See "The end of the game" below. The couple can never initiate a handshake, only the broker.

If the broker wants to "show another place", they let the couple know that they have something else that would be perfect for them. The *hope* player must then frame a new *showing a property* scene, with a new location.

Dream sequences

A *dream sequence* scene happens within a *showing a property* scene. If at any time during a *showing a property* scene, either member of the couple touches the other (not the broker), even accidentally, this triggers a *dream sequence*. The *hope* player should be watching for hand holding, brushes, hugs, etc and call for *dream sequence*.

The *hope* player frames a new scene, set in the exact same location, but in the future when the couple is living in this room. *Hope* describes what's going on, probably in a typical or idealized day for the couple. The *hope* player must create and play a third character, such as an old or new family member, a friend, or really anyone who has a reason to be in this space. Delivery person or contractor are good options.

The couple and *hope* must both play out the scene in character and within this new context. The couple must play their characters from the point of view of the character who is not *heartbroken*. In other words, this a fantasy.

The couple can touch each other if they'd like and it does not trigger a new scene. The scene ends if either player touches the *hope* player. The couple and the broker are now back where they were before, and the *hope* player returns to being the audience.

The end of the game

If either member of the couple shakes hands with the real estate broker, the game ends.

Whomever is shaking the broker's hand, wins.

If it's the *heartbroken*, then they are forced to come clean to their partner about their feelings before their relationship goes to the next level. They breakup and the *heartbroken* is free to love again.

If it's not the *heartbroken*, then their partner and the broker win. The home is bought, movers are scheduled, and the broker gets a commision. The partner never learns the truth.

If the broker doesn't shake hands before 90 minutes go by, the game ends and *hope* wins. Anything is possible.

FAERIE CIRCLE BY EMILY ASMANN

A freeform game for building empathy.



A freeform game about new identities for up to four players

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FOREWORD FROM THE AUTHOR

This game was written in response to a pattern I noticed while playing these sorts of free form LARPS. The typical set up when playing games about a particular, often marginalized, subset of the population is to be given a description of a character that represents some sort of archetype that tends to occur within a group. And armed with nothing but a few paragraphs and our own pre-conceptions about this group, we end up playing as one-dimensional stereotypes of marginalized people rather than well-rounded human beings. And this is no way to build empathy, but simply a way to delude ourselves with the idea we are enlightened people, and to use the struggles of real strangers to do so.

I wrote this game to attempt to fix this problem by forcing players to think about their characters as people as real as themselves. If this game does nothing else, I hope it will start a dialog within our community about how we can do better. I hope that people will take what works from this game, and use it to make their own games better.

INTRODUCTION

You woke up this morning and realized you are fae. Maybe this realization has been building for a while. Maybe it came on all at once. Maybe you've known for years, but have just now found the courage to do something about it. Regardless, today begins your awakening, the start of your life as your true, complete self.

SETUP

BEFORE PLAY BEGINS, YOU NEED TO:

- Print and cut up the cards from the back of this text.
- Shuffle them into four separate stacks as marked.
- Invite one to four interested players, including yourself.
- Find a comfortable table for your group, preferably in a public place.
- A copy of this text, printed or in pdf. You will need to pass this text around.

Take turns reading each paragraph aloud to the group, following prompts and answering questions as needed. Please note that though this text is written for a group, it is entirely possible to play this game by yourself.

WARMUPS

MEMORIES

Re-enact one of your favorite childhood memories in the play space. You don't have to draw attention to yourself, but to interact with your environment and involve the other players (though they will be re-enacting memories of their own). Re-enact until your story is over, and then join the other players in their re-enactments as best you can. Return to the table together.

I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU

Recount for the group a time when you had to tell somebody something that you were hesitant to share; a secret, a piece of news, a confession of your feelings, a private experience, or something else. Go into however much detail you like, but do say how you felt before hand, how you decided to tell them, how they responded, and what happened after.

BRIEFING

This is a game where you play a version of yourself. You are free to invent or re-contextualize events from your past to suit the story, but your starting point is you as you are today. When asked to consider the events and relationships of your life you will consider the actual events of your (the player's) life and not imagined events or relationships of a fictional character. In the likely event that you already know some of the people you are playing with, it is best for the purposes of play to pretend that you do not. Players will meet for the first time when play begins.

DISCLAIMER

This is a game designed to build empathy. It takes elements from the authors lived experience, experiences of the author's friends, and some news stories. Some people may find that the situations described closely mirror their own life. While this doesn't prevent one from playing, such people should use caution. If you find yourself having an intensely emotional response that you are unprepared or unwilling to explore in play because of this, stop play immediately and proceed to the debriefing if you are able. Your well being is more important than any game.

WHAT ARE FAE FOLK?

The Fae Folk (the broadly accepted proper term) are a subset of the human race accounting for no more than 1% of the total population. A true population count is difficult as widespread societal prejudice causes many fae folk to be reclusive, or to suppress their true nature altogether. Visibility has been increasing in recent years thanks for prominent fae celebrities, but with visibility comes increased conservative backlash.

WHERE DO FAE FOLK COME FROM?

Nobody knows for sure what causes a human to be fae. Some speculate about a goblin ancestor far back in a family tree, or a child exposed to too much pixie dust in the womb, but none of these theories has any conclusive evidence to support it. All that is known for sure is that fae folk are born that way, no matter how many years they spend under the mistaken assumption that they are mundane.

HOW CAN YOU IDENTIFY FAE FOLK?

There are many subtle physical indicators that mark the fae folk: the shape of the ears, the hue of the eyes, or certain elongated bones to name a few. For some, these features alone are not enough to give them away, but typically the fae folk themselves, or those familiar with them, can recognize them and thus often know one another on sight. Some people's fae features are more obvious than others. The only sure sign that someone is fae is their navel, which bears a glittery, shimmering mark from their mystical essence spilling forth when they embraced their true self.

Years of living in a mundane shell have leaves fae folk unable to naturally produce the aether necessary to manifest their true selves. Luckily, synthetic aether is relatively inexpensive to manufacture, but it is tightly regulated and cannot be legally obtained without a prescription. With it, you feel like yourself. Without it the world loses it's color and you suffer from lethargy and depression. Think about your current health care situation. Some insurers cover aether, others don't. Even if you do have coverage, most doctors know nothing about it and have no idea how to prescribe a proper dosage, and some outright refuse to prescribe without you undergoing a psychological evaluation. Many are forced to turn to black-market pharmacies to meet their needs.

HOW ARE FAE FOLK VIEWED BY THE WORLD AT LARGE?

At this time, go around the group, and everyone say at least one thing you know about the fae from stories or legends. Combine these 'facts' with the following to get a sense for what sort of beliefs or stereotypes exist about fae folk.

- "Fae folk like to kidnap children and replace them with fairies."
- "Fae folk are naturally deceitful, always looking to trick mundane people into making onesided deals."
- "If you are alone in a room with a fae person there is nothing stopping them from dragging you to Arcadia, never to return."
- "If a fae person offers you something to eat or drink, it might be poisonous."

PLAY

YOUR NAME

Finally, everyone must choose a name. Names have important symbolic power for fae folk.

Picking a new name represents embracing your new identity. It doesn't need to be anything fancy; for every Titania or Rumpelstiltskin there are many Theodores or Sarahs. What matters is that it feels right, and you are free to try several different names until you find the right fit.

On the other hand, your old name will become a curse. Hearing it will cause you physical pain, especially when used to refer to you. This effect will fade over the years, but it will never fully disappear.

SCENES

Play occurs in scenes that take place around a table. When you are at the table you are in the community space, interacting with the other players and talking about your lives and struggles and joys. When you are away from the table, you are alone and facing the world at large.

Play begins with all players around the table. Introduce yourselves to one another, and discuss your hopes and fears about the future as one of the fae folk, and proceed as described above. Play ends after the card from stack four is drawn and it's prompts acted upon.

When you feel a scene around the table has reached a conclusion, or otherwise wish to leave it, take a card from the first stack (then second, then third, then fourth) and move away from the table. Do not draw from the same stack twice. With fewer than four players some cards will remain.

Read the card and follow any instructions on it. Once all players have left the scene a new scene begins, and you have three options:

You may monologue in response to your card.

You may return to the table prepared to discuss your card with the other players.

You may hold your card in your hand and try not to think about it.

MONOLOGUES

When monologuing, a play may face towards the other players or away from them. (Play experience will likely be most fruitful if other players can hear your monologue, but it is not required.) While a player is monologuing, any player current at the table may approach and lightly touch the monologuing player on the shoulder. This is known as reaching out, and it serves as an invitation for the monologuing player to join them at the table.

DISCUSSION

The scene at the table begins once any monologues have finished. The purpose of the discussion is to share your experience and feelings and to support one another emotionally. At any time you may reach out to a player away from the table by lightly touching them on the shoulder. In this way you can invite others to join the conversation at the table.

PUTTING IT OUT OF YOUR MIND

If you take the third option, you cannot set the card down until you have addressed its content in some way, or until play has ended.

DEBRIEFING

The dead player will lead this debriefing. If you are comfortable doing so, sit in a circle holding hands.

Now that we have found a new place, it's time to resume the people that we were before we began play.

THANK YOU FOR PLAYING!

- Everyone, take turns sharing your favorite moments of each character. Just remind us of the scene and what was happening. "Favorite" could mean whatever you decide it means.
- Think about your lifestyle choices. Would your fae self have been able to make those same choices? Would those choices have been complicated by the realities of fae life?
- Which parts of play were most different from your actual lives?
- How did the stereotypes outlined in the beginning affect how you answered and discussed your card prompts?
- Were there any card prompts that you have never had to think about before?
- The prompts are taken directly from experiences of trans people. Were you aware of these experiences? What do you think about that?
- Are there trans people in your life? Are you even aware of their experiences? If you aren't, why do you think you aren't?
- Reflect on what your Fae self wanted most; of all things, large or small, what was the thing that was most important to them? Now, imagine that your actual self is a friend of your Fae self. Imagine that you don't know much about their day to day life. Would you impede or enable that for them? How? What would it take to do one or the other?

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CARDS

1A

In the next 6 months

This is a big change. If you're at all close with your parents you'll have to tell them one way or another. Your only other option is to break off contact and never see them again, which might be your best option. Think about your parents, and how you'd expect them to respond to a big revelation like this. You may have different expectations for each parent. Then look at the player to your right and to your left (or nearest people if you are playing by yourself or with only one other).

If the player to your left is taller:

They take it better than you expected. They may still make mistakes from time to time and say something that hurts you out of ignorance, but at the very least they don't let this change your relationship with them. They may even be eager to support you in whatever way they can.

If the player to your right is taller:

They respond worse than you expected. At best they are reluctant to acknowledge your change, at worst they respond angrily or violently. If you happen to live with one or both of your parents, you will likely have to find a new place to live, if only to escape the awkward atmosphere.

1 A

1B

In the next 6 months

You are walking down the street when you see an old friend. You've drifted apart over the years and haven't seen each other since shortly after your awakening. You smile and say hello, but they keep walking as if you're not even there.

1B

1C

In the next 6 months

Think about a friend you've known for a long time (over a year at least); someone who you've had a lot of fun hanging out with, but don't necessarily have a deep emotional relationship with. How does their response to your awakening make it uncomfortable to hang out with them? When do you realize that your friendship is over?

1D

In the next 6 months

If you are currently in a romantic relationship (If you are in more than one, focus on the longest):

How does your partner respond initially when you tell them you are fae? How do they respond to the changes you are going through? How long until they tell you that they just don't have the same feelings for you anymore? Do you stay friends?

If you are not currently in a romantic relationship:

You may be single now, but living as your true self gives you a sense of confidence that you've never known before, so who knows what the future may bring.

1D

2A

In the next year

You are having coffee with someone you've just recently met. Is it a date or are you just friends? Either way, things are going well and both of you are having a great time. The other person says you should do this again some time. Since they seem so open-minded, you decide to mention that you're fae. They politely excuse themself. You do not hear from them, and they do not return your calls.

2A

2B

In the next year

You make a new friend. They seem to notice that there is something unusual about you. How do you steer the conversation to find out what they think about fae folk? They have no idea what fae even means, and they don't seem to care. Do you try to explain it to them, or is it enough that they like you for you?

2B

2C

In the next year

You've made an appointment for a routine physical. However, at the doctor's office the physician informs you that they "only know how to treat normal humans" and you'll have to "find someone who specializes in your kind." The idea that your physiology is significantly different from anyone else is absurd. Do you make a scene, or leave quietly? Do you search for another doctor, knowing the same thing could happen again? Do you file an official complaint, knowing it is unlikely that anything will come of it?

2D

In the next year

You have developed an illness that has lasted for over a month. It isn't debilitating, but you decide to see a doctor just to be safe. The doctor listens to your symptoms and speculates that it might be related to the aether you take. They suggest you stop taking it for two weeks and come back if it doesn't improve. Do you argue with your doctor to try to find the real cause? Do you follow your doctor's direction and stop taking your aether, knowing what that will do to your mental and emotional health? Or do you just ignore the problem and hope it goes away on your own?

2D

3A

In the next 2 years

You have just been contacted by someone who said some very hurtful things in response to your awakening. Someone you haven't heard from in years. Is it a family member? They say they want to reconnect and apologize. Do you trust them enough to give them the chance? Is it worth the risk?

3A

3B

In the next 2 years

You are reading a news story about a fae woman who was murdered by her mundane boyfriend. Was it someone you know? The boyfriend is claiming he was so shocked when he learned the woman he was dating was fae that he lost control of himself, and is not accountable for his actions. You know such defenses have historically worked in the murderer's favor.

3B

3C

In the next 2 years

You are attempting to use a public restroom. Another person inside sees you, screams, and attacks you with a steel bell. Do you defend yourself, knowing that if the police get involved you are likely to be the one arrested? Or do you run away and try to find another restroom?

3C

3D

In the next 2 years

You are walking in your neighborhood at night when you are stopped by the police. After a few degrading questions, you are arrested for planning to commit a child abduction. At the station the holding cells are already occupied, so they handcuff you next to the toilet "for the safety of the other detainees." In the morning you are released without charges.

3D

4

You have died. How did it happen? Did you yourself end it, or did someone else take it upon himself to snuff out your life in defense of his own twisted masculinity? When the local media reports on your death, do they use your true name or your old, mundane name? Once you have decided, as dispassionately as possible narrate the circumstances of your death to the other players as if you were reading from a news report.

Once you are done, place this card back on the table so the other players can follow their prompt. Leave the table and find a place of your liking to debrief. The others will join you shortly.

OTHER PLAYERS

Continue the scene around the table for a short while in the dead player's absence. How do you respond to the news?

Whenever you are ready, you may leave the table. Go find the dead player (wherever they wandered off to) and join them for the debriefing.

4

FIGHT TRUCK BY ROSE DANGER LALONDE

Fight Truck is a game about taking your fate away from the people who would control you and then chucking it in the back of a rented U-Haul. Written for queer folks, by a queer lady.

FIGHT truck

WHAT STARTS WITH

"F"

AND ENDS IN

"uck":

a truckform LARP by Rose Danger Lalonde

What the hell is FIGHT truck?

FIGHT truck is about taking your body into your hands and then using those hands and that body to fight your friends in the back of a rented U-Haul. It is finding moments of power and consensual violence in a transient, moving space. It is about breaking rules and maybe about breaking bones, or faces. In Fight truck you may find yourself hurt and angry and lost; this is normal. It is a game about taking risks, fucking up, and losing. To be explicit: you cannot win Fight Truck.

There's a lot of shit in life that you shouldn't do, shouldn't have done, shouldn't have to do. Fight truck presents an opportunity to choose to do something that is a horrible idea and just fucking do it anyway. It mixes symbolics of rental, of moving and fighting and doing the illegal shit you really, REALLY shouldn't. And fuck it, you're doing it anyway, and holy shit this is so much better than you feared and so much worse than you hoped. It's about running from your problems and being locked into a world you weren't prepared for. It's about shedding blood and tears and aggression at people who don't deserve it, punching each other instead of punching up, and making it through that together.

How do you Fight TRUCK?

In order to Fight Truck, mix the following ingredients:

- A pack of queer punks (the Riders). No cishets allowed in the fight truck.
- One (1) U-Haul or comparable rented box truck.
- One (1) licensed driver (the Driver).
- At least One (1+) first aid kit, I don't know, I'm not a doctor.
- Streets.

Rent the U-Haul and drive it to the start location. This can be anywhere basically that the pack of queer punks can collect themselves. Maybe you have another car or two, maybe you don't. Either way you've got to pack everyone into one caravan – there's no second trips here. You need to go NOW, and get the fuck out of wherever you are.

In the back of the fight TRUCK, you fight. You can throw punches or spit insults or both, whatever your fellow Riders consented to. That's right, you're all just along for the ride, because when you're in that truck you can't see shit. the Driver is in charge of where the truck is going, and the best you can do to talk to that asshole is pound on the front wall of your little box and hope they hear you. They probably won't because they're an asshole who listens to bad music, but you have to put up with it. Because fuck you is why. You'll probably get knocked on your ass a few times and fuck if it isn't a hard place to fight in but you've got to because there's nowhere else.

Eventually, the Fight trUCK stops. Maybe you switch Riders or pick up some new losers to get in the truck. Maybe you're done. Get your ass cleaned up and go to Denny's or something and talk about it, whatever. That's all postgame.

Variants:

Fight box: So maybe you don't know anyone who can (or will) drive the fight Truck. Rent a storage unit or something and fight there. Bring a grill and make turkey burgers if you want. Also everyone wears old boxing gloves, why not?

Hug Truck: Hug instead of fight. Pretty simple change. Hug the fuck out of each other. Hold on tight when the truck takes a sharp corner. Give backrubs when you're on the freeway. Compliment each other, tell each other all the ways in which you're beautiful.

Moving Day: Rent a Fight Truck, but instead of fighting, get your pack of queer punks to load up all your belongings (prepacked in boxes, mostly) into the back of the truck. Ride in the cab of the truck and drive somewhere. When you get there, unpack your shit and move (back?) in.

Fuck truck: I'm not going to explain this one. Beware of splinters.

A few notes for everyone.

The first big point here is that everything that happens in this larp is to be consensual. The rules I've written so far are there to be broken – its probably necessary, really. Don't fuck with the consent of your friends and fellow larpers. Don't break the trust bonds you're establishing. Just fucking don't. Agree to what is on the table and off the table before the larp happens, and understand that you're locking yourself in a box on wheels with some other people and that you might not be able to get out when you want to get out.

FIGHT TRUCK is **not** a safe LARP. That's what the first aid kits are for. You might end up in the hospital! Also, it is probably completely illegal, what do I know, I'm not a lawyer. FIGHT TRUCK is probably not a larp anyone should play, ever, under any circumstances! is what I would definitely say if I was a lawyer.

On Trucks and Fighting

Fight Truck was not written for people who are in charge of things.

Fight Truck was written in a single wild dash of inspiration and desire, on a broken laptop, for people like me who exist in the margins, who are never safe and who might relish being so by choice, just for once.

It is to you that I write this message.

Take this game and make it your own. Change it, mediate its violence, play the variants, create new ones. Remix it, borrow from it, critique it, reject it. I'm not in charge of Fight Truck, I'm not in charge of you.

If it is not for you, don't play it! Call it a zero-player game, have a laugh, move on. Certainly there are problems with it, things I could have fixed, things I would rather be different in retrospect. But I won't change it, I won't fix it, because sometimes you don't have that option.

Maybe Fight Truck is not perfect, but what is?

With love, Rose Danger

FOR A LONG TIME I WOULD GO TO BED EARLY

BY MICHAEL SUCH

An American Freeform about memory, empathy and sensation inspired by Proust's "In Search of Lost Time." Players stitch together memories of their lives into one using improv inspired storytelling and movement.

For a Long Time I Would Go to Bed Early

Michael Such

October 25, 2015

For a long time I would go to bed early. Sometimes, the light barely out, my eyes closed so quickly that I did not have time to tell myself: "I'm falling asleep." And when I awoke in the middle of the night, not knowing where I was, I could not even be sure at first who I was. But then the memory of various other places where I lived and might now very possibly be would come like a rope let down from heaven to draw me up out of the abyss of not-being. In a flash I would traverse my life and gradually piece together the original components of my ego.

An American freeform about memory, empathy and sensation inspired by Proust's "In Search of Lost Time." For three to five players and one facilitator with a roughly 90 minute running time. Requires a private space big enough to move around in (preferably with dimmable lights) and one raisin (or similar small food item) per player.



This script is written for the facilitator. Your job is simply to facilitate the game and solve any disputes. You do not play the game or shape the narrative. Read the next section out loud to the players.

You are all the Narrator. The Narrator is in bed at night at the edge of sleep. They are remembering things from their life as they lie here. This game is about reconstructing one particular memory of the Narrator. You are going to describe what the Narrator remembers together whilst moving around the space. You will start narrating very separate truthful memories and gradually merge these together into one fictional story. This will take thirty to fourty five minutes. First I will run three warm up exercises for you to connect with each other and understand the concepts behind the game. This will take approximately an hour.

Whenever you see the three swan symbol below get a player to read out the paragraph in italics in the preamble beginning with "for a long time I would go to bed early."



This exercise is about awareness and using sensation to access your memories.

Given one raisin to each player. The players will be exploring the raisin with all their senses and then discovering what memories this brings up. Read the following steps aloud leaving time between each. The whole exercise should take ten minutes.

25 Start by placing the raisin on your palm and looking at it closely. Examine every surface and detail. What can you notice about this raisin that you have never seen before?

Now close your eyes. Use your fingers to explore the texture of the raisin.

30 Smell the raisin. How does this affect you? Does it conjure up any memories?

Place the raisin in your mouth carefully and examine it with your sense of taste. Begin chewing the raisin very slowly without swallowing. Notice how the sensation evolves.

Now swallow the raisin. How do you feel? How has eating the raisin made you feel? Are there any thoughts or memories swirling around?

Keeping their eyes closed each player should now share a brief memory triggered by the experience of eating the raisin.

YYY

This exercise is about connecting the players and practicing swapping narrative control. This consists of three stages of increasing complexity.

Players now form a circle. One player should lead and improvise a movement and accompanying sound. Other players should simultaneously mimic this movement and sound as precisely as possible. Rotate the leading player around the circle two or three times.

50 Suggest the players start with slow and simple movements. The leading player should not copy other play-

For the next two stages one player should stand in the centre of the circle and become the leader. The leader retells a short, simple, recent memory in their natural voice whilst rotating to make eye contact with other players. Other players should simultaneously mimic the body language, tone and words of the leader. Every player should take a turn at leading.

Correct the leader if they intentionally slowing down to make it easier for the other players. Remind the other players to keep up both the voice and physical mimicking. Stop the current story if it runs over one minute.

The final stage is a repeat of this exercise with one alteration. Now other players can tag out the leader to take leadership and continue the story. The story should start as a real memory but continue as fiction. Every player should take a turn at starting a story.

65 Players should allow the starting leader to establish the basis of their memory before tagging them out.



This exercise is about honesty and open communication.

Players form two lines facing a partner on the opposite sides of the room. Designate one side of the room as "callers" and other side as "walkers." The goal of the exercise is for the callers to get their partner to walk across the room to them. They do this by saying the word "come" to their partner.

After receiving the word "come" walkers step forward only if they honestly feel inspired to do so. Otherwise
they stay standing still. The callers should play with body language and tone to get the walker to step forwards.
Repeat this exercise swapping roles and partners several times.

This stage should take a few minutes and you should decide when it ends. Get the players to spread out in the room with their final partner. They face each other, put their hand on their partner's shoulder and close their eyes. First players synchronise breathing with their partner. Secondly the pairs should start making the same noise at the same time.

No one member of the pair should lead or follow but instead they should aim to swap constantly between these states. The contact through the shoulder will help the players. Starting with smooth, slow sounds is easiest but players should try to explore a range of sounds.



These are the rules for the game itself. Read out the instructions and answer any questions before beginning play. It may be helpful to demonstrate parts of the game. You may also gently coach players during the game.

The players will be telling the story of what the Narrator remembers as they lie there in the darkness half asleep. The aim is to take very separate true memories from each player and gradually merge them together into one narrative. Once the players have achieved a singular narrative any player may end the game by reciting the introductory paragraph. All players should then join in saying the introductory paragraph, speaking at the same time. A guideline is for each player to get three turns narrating before the game ends.

Here are some instructions on how to narrate. The aim is also to implicitly construct the singular character of the Narrator from these separate memories. Therefore when speaking the players always use "I" and not give a name to the Narrator. They also do not refer to the Narrator's age, gender, race or orientation unless it is directly relevant to the story. The motivation behind this is to prevent dissonance between the stories and the Narrator becoming male and so on by default. Whilst narrating players use gestures to illustrate their story and make eye contact with other players.

I longed to call her back, to say to her "kiss me just once more."

105

My uncle advised Swann not to see Odette for some days, after which she would love him all the more.

At all times there will be exactly one person narrating the story and all players should be clear on who this is. If you are narrating and someone else starts then stop speaking. Conversely if no-one is speaking then step forwards and pick up narration. For the first two rounds players should aim to give everyone a turn before

speaking again. After this players begin to intermix narration more.

Players will start narrating their own separate memories. They stop before the story of their memory is finished. On the second round they begin to tie their memory to other player's. They can continue their previous story or start a new one. The connection can be causal or thematic. The aim is to all end up speaking about the same story but this can start very slowly. Above all players should not "overcook" the connections.

In this round I told a memory about a trip to a Brazil. Another player told a memory about a breakup. I pick up my story again and talk about how the breakup caused me to go to Brazil.

I spoke about buying a house. Another player spoke about a proposal. I jump forward in time and talk about the Narrator being newly married and moving into the house.

I retold a memory about a walk with a friend over fields. Another player spoke about playing by a lake as
5 a child. I pick up my story again but add a fictional element and introduce the lake. I also have a character from
another player's story join the walk.

Here is what players do if they are not narrating . They will be making movements and sounds in response to the narration. This is done intuitively rather with careful planning.

The movement can be broken down into two parts. Firstly they should move in relation to the narrating player based on how they feel about the narration. This is similar to the "come" exercise. If they are enjoying and empathising with the story they should move closer to the narrating player. Conversely if they feel disconnected from the story they should move away. If the story is going in a direction where they do not wish to continue with the game they can simply leave the room.

The narrating player is talking about a garden and their description is very beautiful. I move towards them.

When I narrated the character of Pierre he was calm, kind and gentle. Another player is describing Pierre as being brash and arrogant and I find this confusing. I move away from them.

The narrating player begins describing an assault. I don't want to play a game with this in so I leave the room.

If players are very close to the narrating player they can make physical contact. If they are in physical contact and feel comfortable they may close their eyes. Movement can still be played with whilst in contact by changing the intimacy of the touch. Players should not touch intimate areas.

I am touching the narrating player's hand. They are describing a tender moment of the Narrator with their first love which I am really enjoying. I move my hand up to their upper arm.

Secondly players can move in a way which is sympathetic to the narration to fill out the story.

The narrating player starts speaking about the Narrator's grandfather, so I bend over and move like an old man.

They can also make sounds to compliment the narration but should avoid dialogue. This could represent part of the environment for instance. Players are advised to build sounds with each other.

The narrating player describes a flock of swans so I begin making bird noises.

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The narrating player is speaking about a dinner party. Another player begins murmuring like the sound of a crowd, so I also begin murmuring.



Here is how the game begins . This section can be read out to the players as they do the steps.

Spread yourselves in the room and stand at its edges. Make eye contact with other players.

Take a moment to think about what makes you different from all the players. Physically, mentally and emotionally. What life experiences might you have had that they have not? Did you grow up in different circumstances?

Now turn your back to the other players.

Dim the lights in the room if you are able.

Focus on one sensation in the room. In can be something you see, smell or even just feel. One by one I would like you to talk about this sensation in as much detail as you are able.

Do not let this step run longer than a minute or two.

Close your eyes. Is there a memory lurking just beneath the surface of your mind? Concentrate on how you are different to other players and the sensation you have just described. What comes up? When you have a memory in mind turn to face the other players keeping silent.

When all players have turned around bring up the lights.

Now the game begins. Someone please narrate your memory.

During the game you may need to remind players of rules, particularly the following:

- · Stop the initial memories before they reach their conclusion
- · To move and make noises
- To keep eye contact with the other players

Once they have finished talking about the same story and one player begins saying the introductory text the game ends.

Acknowledgements

- In Search of Lost Time by Marcel Proust, particularly the beginning of Swann's Way
- Raisin mindfulness exercise, taking the West Virginia University script (http://hfhc.ext.wvu.edu/r/download/114469)
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- $\bullet \ \ Memory\ retelling/mimicking\ exercise\ as\ taught\ by\ Jules\ Munns\ at\ The\ Nursery\ (www.thenurserytheatre.com)$
- · Come exercise as taught by Luke Beahen

- The Harold improv format as popularized by Del Close
- Group ROOM (www.welcometoroom.com)
 - A Touch of the Whip (unpublished freeform by the author)
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Index

210

- 205 I. Raisin mindfulness exercise, 19
 - 2. Mimicking and memory retelling exercise, 44
 - 3. Honesty and movement with the word "come" exercise, 68
 - 4. The game overview, 89
 - 5. The game how to narrate, 97
 - 6. The game combining narratives, 113
 - 7. The game movement and sound for non-narrating players, 128
 - 8. The game starting the game, 164

GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

FRAGMENTS BY PIOTR DUDA-DZIEWIERZ

Fragments is an abstract family drama about a child and two parents,
one of whom gradually succumbs to a deadly disease. Played in reverse, the three different viewpoints
create the story about what happened.



Colophon

Title: Fragments

Writer: Piotr Duda-Dziewierz

Players: 3 Game Master: 1 Preparation: 1 hour Play time: 1 hour

Intro

Fragments is a family drama about a child and two parents, one of whom gradually succumbs to a disease which ultimately leads to an inevitable death. It's also a story about how we are affected by intense situations, and how these remove us from the safe everyday life and cause trauma. How we lose the ability to see clearly, and how we form deeply subjective memories about what has happened. There is never one single truth - only fragments, which in this case are three different viewpoints forming a trajectory leading to tragedy.

About the game

The scenario is an abstract story about the steady decline of a family. It contains six short scenes which are played in reverse chronological order. A central point in the scenario is, that it's gradually revealed that the sickness of the "sick" family member actually is alcohol abuse.

Because the theme of alcoholism is intense, and potentially a difficult one to be surprised with, it's important for you as game master to carefully observe the player's reactions throughout the game. I see the debriefing as mandatory, as it allows for proper discussion of the experience and the themes touched.

Abstraction

The scenario is written abstractly on purpose. The characters don't have names or gender. There is a child and two parents, but the child can be adopted so all combinations of gender are possible. In the workshop the players will get time to design their unique family, as well as to decide where and when their story takes place - again something not determined by me beforehand.

Execution

During the game, the players will be sitting closely on three chairs facing each other. You, the game master, will be standing besides them and setting the scenes.

Between the scenes you will be the narrator, and start the scenes by describing them. Each scene has the same structure - to begin with you read the intro text. Take your time, reading it with proper pace and intonation. It is supposed to give the players a starting point in the scene. A feeling where they are physically and

emotionally.

Then the three players in turn do a monologue, where they tell how their character experienced the situation just described, and how they felt at that time. It's important that it's their own subjective version of what happened. The two other players are not allowed to join or interrupt. It's a personal monologue - here's an example:

Example for a monologue. The Child, scene 1:

I'm sitting on the side of the bed, looking at what's left of my mother. She's so pale and bony. I... don't know what to say. This has been coming for so long, and I've been crying so much. But I'm all dried up now. All empty inside. In a way she's already gone. I don't recognize the mother I once knew, behind those hollowed eyes. I know this is coming to an end, but I don't know what to say or do. Even though I know it's wrong, I'd wish it would be over with now. There's no reason to keep it going. I look to my dad and can feel that he's not really there. I think about how my mother used to be, and feel how the tears start pressing after all.

When all the players have done their monologues, you say "And it happened like this" and they now play out the scene based on the intro and what was just said. Knowing all of the monologues, they can now play directly and create tension and conflict as they see fit. Still they have to base their play in their own monologue, and not do or say something that would contradict it. With the knowledge about the other's innermost thoughts, the scene should be set for some heartfelt and gut wrenching scenes, with the outcome already decided.

You cut the scene and continue to the next, where you start with its intro text. At the very end there is a special scene - a prologue - which is without the usual monologues.

The scenario is supposed to be short and intense. To achieve that the scenes have a fixed time limit. The monologues are two minutes for each player and the common scenes are four minutes. Try to get a feel for how long two and four minutes feel like. You're not supposed to sit with a stopwatch and cut people off as soon as they go over time - the limits are guidelines. But in order to keep it short and intense, they should be followed as much as possible.

With the initial workshop and final debriefing, the structure of the scenario is as follows:

Workshop

Intro
Structure of play
Monologue training
Distribution of Characters

The Game (For each scene 1-6)

Intro text Monologues Common scene

Workshop (1 hour)

Intro (5 minutes)

Present the scenario - what is to be expected and how long it will take (45 minutes preparation, one hour of play and 15 minutes of debriefing). Briefly explain the theme of a family tragedy, how not everything is known beforehand and how things will be revealed along the way. Small talk about initial expectation to get people to relax. Don't spoil anything or answer too specific questions!

Structure of play (10 minutes)

Go through the structure of play, once you get started. One hour af play. No breaks. Scenes consist of an intro, 3 monologues and a common scene. Point out that the monologues should be kept to 2 minutes, and the common scenes to 4. Describe the nature of the monologues and common scenes as explained above. The monologues are personal and indirect - they give a foundation to act out the common scenes together, where it will be possible to play on direct conflict. Show the players the signal to wrap up the monologue or scene - as you put a hand on their shoulder, they should try to end their current sentence or point. Go for a fade out or natural pause. It's not supposed to be cut too abruptly.

Monologue training and Touch (15 minutes)

It's important that the players understand how to do their monologues. Allow them to practice - to each in shift give a rehearsal monologue for two minutes. The theme is not important, it could be about last time they commuted to work, or how they were out shopping. Something everyday like. The form should be in present tense, something like: "I'm in the bathroom looking in the mirror. Noticing the lines in my face. How I'm aging". Ask the players to focus on their inner thoughts, and on how they perceive their surroundings. If they don't seem to catch on, and are having problems doing a monologue, you can begin and give them an good example on how it can be done.

There is an important way touch can be utilized during the monologues. If the active speaker touches and holds the hand of another, the content said, will be know to the recipient of the touch. So innermost feelings and secrets can be said without touch, but something they want to signify the other(s) somehow know - even by accident - can be shared by the touch. The non-active players still can't vocally respond to what is being said. Emotionally though...

Distribution of characters (15 minutes)

Make it clear to the players that the characters are written abstractly in the sense that they're not anchored in a specific point in time. The scenario takes place over a stretch of time, and is played chronologically backwards, so the characters and their

interaction, will develop and change throughout the scenes. The characters, as they are written, do not represent how they actually are at the time the scenario starts (the chronological ending). If they had to be placed in the chronology, it would be in the middle - around scene 3-4. That means that the players must be prepared to improvise on how their relations will develop, and towards the end (chronological beginning) change their relations to for how they were before later events shaped them.

It's solely up to you, the game master, to decide how to distribute the characters, but personally I'd like to point out that "The Sick" can be a very tough character to play, and should be given to a resilient player, however you choose to interpret that.

After the players have read their characters, ask them to give them gender and names to form a more specific, personal story. It's recommendable (but not mandatory), as it gives some more tools to create the common story of the 3. As mentioned, there are no restrictions regarding gender, sexuality or age.

To help them finish their characters and relations, ask them some or all of the following questions. Ask them to answer shortly - it's not supposed to be very detailed. There should still be room for individual interpretation.

- What are your names?
- The parents are middle aged at the beginning (end). How old are they? Are they roughly the same age?
- How old is the child?
- How and where do you live?
- What do the parents do for a living?
- What is the child's biggest interest?

Debriefing – after the game (15 minutes)

Ask the players to close their eyes, and hold hands. Tell them:

"You slip away from the fragments of these other troubled lives, and return to your own. You are right here. Thank you all for creating this experience. Thank you. Please open your eyes."

When they do, give them a minute to come back, and then discuss the game. First and foremost be aware if anyone is feeling particularly affected, and focus on being there for them. Here are some things you can ask the players:

- How are you feeling after the game?
- What did you like?
- What didn't work?
- What do you think about the hidden theme about alcohol abuse?
- Is there something you didn't act on, some inner play or thoughts that you would like to share now?

Character #1: The Sick

As far as you can remember, the pain has weighed you down. Few moments of being happy and content amidst the general feeling empty and depressed. You don't feel that you truly belong anywhere. You will never reach your true potential, for the fear of failure will always hold you back. That's why every talent you ever had was smothered before it had a chance to flourish. You were something once. A promising artist. But the only thing you have to show for it now is a life full of regret over not have taken the chance.

You never liked your job, and see your whole career as a meaningless grind. A true Sisyfos-task of pushing the same boulder back and forth.

You love your partner and your child, but they can't help you. They never could. You don't envy them for having to put up with you, but on the other hand you get sick of their well meant care and critique. You can get defensive and angry when they try to push you too much. But you know that you need them. For without them you would be all alone with your demons.

The guilt you feel towards your child is overwhelming. You haven't been there, as you should have, for so very long now. You can't even begin to imagine how your child will be influenced by the way you are. The shame and self loathing go hand in hand with your parenthood.

You are a shell about to crack. Your breath is heavy and tired. You have stopped fearing the end.

What is the matter with you?

Character #2: The Spouse

This wasn't the way your life had supposed to be. You love your partner so much, and when you got the child, the future looked so bright and secure. But as time passed, you slowly noticed the shadow growing still stronger inside your loved one.

All this time you have tried so hard to be supportive and helpful. And patient. Oh so patient. But in the end it doesn't feel like you have really made a difference. And the love has suffered... You remember how you swore that you would alway take care of your partner, and how you loved everything about your relationship. This love, that felt so tender and true. The security and care...

All of that started to change as the shadow grew, and you began to feel that you stayed because of duty, and not love. That you couldn't leave someone who meant so much to you, and was in so much pain. There had to be a solution. A cure.

During that time you also started feeling guilty about having neglected your child. The child that had to grow up so fast, and take care of itself while it could see one parent become still weaker, while the under sank under helpless despair.

You always saw yourself as a good honest person, who tries to do the right thing, no matter what. Why does everything always have to be so difficult for you?

What is the matter with you?

Character #3: The Child

It came slowly at first, this sense of something being wrong, but when you finally knew, it was far too late. You still remember the good careless times where you and your parents were in harmony, but that seems like a distant dream now.

One of them started to change. You didn't see it until it was obvious to everyone. You were told that the disease went up and down. Sometimes it was fine, and others terrible. But it was clear to see that over time it was going in the wrong direction.

Most of all you felt abandoned and let down by your parents. You didn't get any positive attention, and felt left to yourself. You lost interest in school, and started getting in trouble. But when these cries for help were overlooked, you couldn't bring yourself to do anything further. You felt sorry for your parents. One sick and weakening and the other desperately trying to help without much success.

But it was hard on you! It wasn't fair. They were supposed to take care of you, not the other way round. You envied your classmates trouble free lives. If only they knew, they would be nicer to you. Wouldn't they?

But they're not. They keep away from you, and you can see their parents looking worried at you and whisper, when they think you can't hear. Saying you're different.

Why couldn't your parents have been normal? Is it because of you, that everything went wrong?

What is the matter with you?

The Game (1 hour)

Intro

You sit together. The child and the parents. Or are you sitting? Are you here at all? This place is special. Outside of time and space. But you remember each other clearly. Your family. The good times, and the bad. The love and the pain starts to come back. To each of you in your own way. What has happened can't be changed, but can it be understood?

Right now the easiest thing to recall, is the ending of your story...

Scene 1 - The Death Bed

You are at the hospital. It's all about to come to an end. One of you is dying, and you've all seen it coming for a long time. That inevitable fate slouching towards you. But again, maybe you could have done something differently? It doesn't matter anymore. It's too late now - nothing more can be done. The Sick One is lying still with needles and tubes giving the last futile life support. In a way it's more peaceful than you had imagined. It doesn't feel dramatic, but almost unreal to be here in this sterile room and see each other for the last time. Your final moment is here. It's time to say goodbye. How do you even do that? Does it make any sense?

Order of monologues:

The Sick - The Spouse - The Child

Common scene:

Nothing of particular to note here. Don't rush into cutting if apparently nothing happens. Looks and thoughts can say more than words here. It's perfectly fine if this is a silent scene.

Scene 2 – The Admittal

You arrive at the hospital. It's hard to believe that it has come so far. The sickness is winning. Taking over. You are slowly realizing that that this probably can't be stopped anymore. That the hope has been in vain. You [Point to The Sick] are a shadow of your former self. The sickness has trashed your body and clouded your mind. You are cold. This place is so uninviting. Sharp fluorescent lights, electronic beeps and smell of iodine. You [Point to The Spouse] are somewhat panicked and are desperately trying to get the receptionist to get hold of a doctor and a bed. The Child is left alone, to support and hold up the collapsing sick parent.

Order of monologues:

The Spouse - The Child - The Sick

Common scene:

You play along as a NPC - The Receptionist Nurse. You are professional, curt counterbalance to the upset Spouse.

Scene 3 – The Breakdown

This is the breaking point. You [Point to The Sick] have finally succumbed. You are lying on the bathroom floor, and can't get up. You desperately try to focus when you family comes to help. The nausea is overwhelming and you throw up. Is the sickness winning? You try talking to each other, but there is no understanding. You come from different worlds. You are manic and incoherent. They are frightened and worried.

Order of monologues:

The Sick - The Child - The Spouse

Common scene:

This is supposed to be intense. If the players can't seem to get the scene started in that direction, try pushing it a bit with describing some details in this chaotic situation:

Blood is running down your face. Your eyes are distant, trying to find way back home.

It stinks of sour bilious vomit. It's all over the place.

Scene 4 - The Escalation

You [Point to The Sick] have been found out. They know now, and there is no turning back. You have kept your abuse hidden for so long, and even you know that they knew [Look at the others - "And you have"], they never knew how bad it actually was. That you had lost it and let the addiction take control of your life. You are in the kitchen, looking at the empty bottles The Child has found in the cleaning closet. Even as you talk you are intoxicated.

Order of monologues:

The Child - The Spouse - The Sick

Common scene:

This is a central and hopefully conflicted scene. If it fails to kick off, you can try to nudge it, by whisperingly repeat some of the most emotionally hurting thing said during the monologues.

Scene 5 – The Birthday Party

It's your birthday [Point to The Child]. The whole family is gathered, and the house is full of guests celebrating. You are happy and overwhelmed, but it's like you can sense something is not quite right, beneath the surface. The adults look worried when they think you are not looking their way. You [Point to The Sick] are holding a speech. It's difficult. You had to have a little help. Just one sip. Or was it two? Now you're lost for words. can't finish the speech. Your spouse saves you. Out of care or embarrassment? The others are looking. Something is wrong here.

Order of monologues:

The Sick - The Spouse - The Child

Common scene:

You play along as a NPC - The Mother of The Spouse / Mother-In-Law of The Sick / Grandmother of The Child. You try to find out what's wrong with The Sick.

Scene 6 (Prologue)

You are on the beach. It's a warm summer evening. Most other people have already gone home. You are all sitting close together on the big blanket in the dunes. It's been a long wonderful day. You ate everything in your giant picnic basket, and have been so relaxed that you decided to stay some longer. None of you was in a hurry to leave. You all know that you will go home in a while, but right now you are sitting holding each other and watching the first stars appear over the setting sun. Everything is good. And always will be.

Order of monologues:

There are no monologues in this last scene.

Common scene:

Get the players to sit close. Let them act out this final scene. What do you say when everything is perfect? Anything at all?

The End of Play - Beginning of Debriefing

Ask the players to close their eyes, and hold hands. Tell them:

You slip away from the fragments of these other troubled lives, and return to your own. You are right here. Thank you all for creating this experience. Thank you. Please open your eyes.

End note

Thank you for reading. And hopefully playing. If you as game master or player have any questions, or wish to share your experience with *Fragments*, you are more than welcome to write me at: piotr@tdcadsl.dk

Piotr Duda-Dziewierz

GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

BY JOSH FOX

Gone but not forgotten is about ghosts, people who died with major issues unresolved. Now they are trapped in limbo, haunted by the emotions that dominated their lives - and that is where they will stay unless they can achieve closure.

Gone but not forgotten

By Josh Fox

Introduction

You remember so little. There was a rush of fear, pain, and then the certainty of your own death. Now you're in a dark place. All that's left of what went before is snatched memories and blurry feelings. But your heart is filled with one powerful emotion, surging above all else, colouring all those little recollections. Unless you can let that emotion go, you will stay here forever in this place of shadow.

You are not alone.

Gone but not forgotten is about ghosts. You play people who died with major issues unresolved. Now they are trapped in limbo, haunted by the emotions that dominated their lives. That is where they will stay unless they can achieve closure. Fortunately, the very people those emotions connect with are here with them.

The focus of the game is on exploring relationships, which you develop in play. You'll be playing to discover the truth about why you're trapped here in limbo, and maybe escape to the afterlife. It's challenging to escape limbo, and it's unlikely everyone will make it. Maybe nobody will make it. That's part of the game.

An important aspect of the game is exploring your characters' unreliable memories of their past. The fog of death means that you don't remember everything about your character and may even fail to remember really big stuff. Other players may describe events that involved you or things you did. You need to be willing to accept that to play this game.

Overview of the game

You'll create together a group of people with unresolved issues, who died together. Then, individually, you'll create the unresolved issue for your character, and the conditions to resolve it. You also create a strong memory, and a dominant emotion your character is driven by. You may create some other memories to flesh your character out a bit.

Because your characters are ghosts, they are semi-corporeal. You wear masks, talk in whispers and move slowly, to represent your ethereal state. You may not touch each other. When you become overwhelmed by emotion, though, you may speak at normal volume or louder, and move normally.

Because death has washed away your identity, your memories are vague and unreliable. You start the game only knowing about the ones you created for your character, but as you hear about other players' memories, you respond by saying what you remember – which may not be quite the same as what they remembered. The game will not tell you whose memories are right and whose are wrong.

You each carry a candle. You have around two hours before your candle burns out. If that happens, you will be trapped in limbo forever. But if you can resolve your issue, you can blow out your candle and move on. Maybe you'll all get to move on, maybe some of you won't. It's possible none of you will.

Setup

Preparation

You will need:

- 2-4 players (4 is best)
- A guiet space which can be made dark
- One 2-hour tea light1 (or flameless alternative) per player, and a dish or such to put each one in
- Print-outs of the game summary [Appendix C] and inspiration tables [Appendix A]

Nice to have:

- Identical masks¹, one per player. Preferably half masks, so they don't interfere with speech.
- Similar clothes worn by the players.
- Some low-key, eerie music to play in the background at a low volume. No vocals.
- Some incense to burn in the room.

Time is short

At the start of the game, light the tea-lights and put them in a dish (or similar). Each of you will carry your candle with you. If it goes out, you have run out of time and will remain in limbo for all eternity. If you resolve your personal issue (see below) then you blow the candle out, and pass to the next life.

If you have only 2 hours for your session, light the candles before you do anything else. If you have longer, you can give yourself a bit more time to roleplay by lighting them after setup is complete.

If you can't get hold of 2-hour tea lights, you can get candles that burn for longer and cut them down. Alternatively, don't worry about getting the candle burn length right, and just set a timer.

Of course, candles will vary in precisely how long they burn for, and this adds to the atmosphere: players are left with some uncertainty in how long they have to resolve their issues. On the other hand, if you have to finish by a particular time, then you should set a timer as well, in case the candles burn for longer than expected. What you must not do is put the timer, or any timepiece, where the players can see them – nor may anyone look at their watch or phone during the game. Not knowing how much time remains is part of the game.

Safety

Read this section out at the start of every game.

This is a tense game where serious issues can be explored. It's an environment where people can get hurt if the wrong material is introduced. Right at the start, everyone writes down on a bit of scrap paper anything they want to be kept out of the game.

Good examples to think about include child abuse, sexual violence, and torture. Remember that these are not just things that someone might bring into the game, they might be things that they remember your character doing. If you can't stomach the thought of that, don't hesitate to ban it.

¹ See materials section at the end of this document for shopping suggestions.

You are free to mention an issue after this point if you realise you forgot something important. Everyone should respect that just as if it had been written down at the start.

During play, you should feel no compunction about calling a halt if the game touches on something you can't cope with. To do so, simply say "cut" and the group will pause play to allow you to take a break and let everyone know what material they need to avoid introducing. Alternatively (and only if you feel comfortable continuing) you can say "brake" to indicate the situation is one you aren't comfortable with and call on players to change direction and/or reduce the intensity.

If nobody has touched on banned material, and nobody has called cut or brake, it's everyone's responsibility to focus and stay with it. This is a game that's meant to be intense and challenging. The presence of the rules above should mean you're able to push people's buttons safe in the knowledge that they have a safety net if it's needed.

Who are you?

To start with, you need a very broad idea of who your group are and how they relate to each other. You're looking for a concept that will allow for complex relationships, betrayals and hurts, hurts that could persist after death. Good examples include:

- A family
- A group of lifelong friends
- Lovers (maybe a couple, perhaps two pairs of lovers, perhaps a polyamorous group)

You also need to create the event which caused you to die at the same time. You won't necessarily remember it, but it's a good idea to all have the same concept in mind. Good examples include:

- Car crash
- House fire
- Natural disaster

There are more examples of group concepts and causes of death in Appendix [A].

Choose a group concept and then each of you come up with a niche that your character occupies. For example, if you chose a family as your group concept, niches you might pick include:

- Father
- Mother
- Eldest child
- Middle child
- Youngest child
- Someone's boy/girlfriend
- Grandchild

Note: you shouldn't spell out in detail the nature of your relationship to the others. Perhaps you're actually an adoptive parent; even so "father" or "mother" is fine. Perhaps you're the child of one of the parents by another person – you don't decide that now. These are broad niches that tell you what sort of relationship issues might be appropriate to introduce. The rest will emerge in play.

Your key memory, unresolved issue, and emotion

"Thy vengeance haunts the silent grave, Thy taunts insult the ashes of the brave"

- Mary Darby Robinson, Ode to Envy

You need to create a key memory, an unresolved issue, and an emotion that is dominating you in the afterlife. You can do them in either order, and the details of how you do each are described below. If you're stuck, you can look at the inspiration tables in Annex [A].

You do not tell the other players about your memory or issue, even if it involves them. You don't consult them, either. The fog of death means that there may be major events from your life that you don't remember at all.

Each character has one clear and distinct memory from their life, something with a strong emotional overtone. Perhaps something traumatic. You decide which of the other characters were involved – at least one. You may also include characters who aren't present with you in limbo. Decide what happened, describing a few sensory details and the emotion(s) you felt. Keep your memory short and simple, and try to describe it from your character's perspective rather than attempting to say what objectively happened.

Example: Elin decides she wants her character to have a memory of her father beating her mother. She describes a memory of lying in bed at night, in the dark, listening to her father's growling voice, a violent thumping and crashing, and the sobs of her mother. She also describes lying awake for hours afterwards, her tears soaking her pillow.

Each character has an unresolved issue that they need to address if they are to move on from limbo. These come in two kinds:

- A question that they need to answer. For example, you need to know who your real father is.
- Something they need another character to say or do. For example, you need your lover to admit that she cheated on you.

Make it a major issue that could drive someone to keep a strong grip on life long after their body stops breathing. It might well relate to your memory. For the issues of the first type, you needn't decide who you'll get the answer from. For issues of the second type, you will need to decide who the target of your issue is.

Finally, decide on an emotion that is dominating you in limbo. It should be a powerful emotion. Good examples include fear, hate, anger, and love. Make it one that follows logically from the memory and/or unresolved issue.

What your character knows

Your character should not take long to realise that they are dead. They do not, however, know that they must resolve their issue if they wish to leave limbo.

Even so, they know the injustice that burns in their breast, or the regret that fills their heart. Your character may not know the rules of the game, but they are driven to play it nonetheless.

Additional memories

Once you've created your key memory, if there's time, noodle around thinking of a few other memories you might have. These don't need to be emotionally powerful or traumatic – in fact it's better if they aren't. Make them about everyday life, memorable events or little snapshots of your past. Don't invent too many of these – definitely no more than three. As before, keep them short and simple and focus on what your character senses and feels.

Once again, don't tell the others about your memories, and don't consult them even if they were a part of them.

You can create further memories during play, whenever you need them. But start off by using the ones you created at the start.

Gameplay

Starting the game

Before you start, make sure everyone is clear what the play area is. Because the game take place in darkness, that will generally be a room; but you should define part of the room as an area for people to go to if / when they have left limbo.

Put on your masks, if you're using them, and switch the lights off.

You begin the game by lying down on the floor. Place your candle nearby, but not close enough that you might accidentally knock it over. Wait for several seconds before beginning play.

You wake up in this shadowy place, with these others, and an emotion burning inside you. When you are ready, pick up your candle and get to your feet.

Playing the game

Practical issues

You may find some aspects of this game turn out to be impractical for some reason. Maybe one of you has a hearing impairment and whispering won't work for them. If so, work around it. The darkness, candles, whispering and so forth are all for atmosphere. They don't trump the needs of your group.

Also be mindful of safety. Keep the room free of clutter and trip-hazards, and remove anything flammable.

Everything you say, say as your character. Everything you do, do it as your character. Simply say what you think they would say, responding to what others say and do as appropriate. You can walk around freely within the play area.

The shadow of death

"The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and where the other begins?"

- Edgar Allen Poe
- Death left you a shadow of what you were. Your personal appearance is blurred and indistinct, as entropy wears away at what remains of you. Your body is insubstantial as morning mist, and passes through anything you touch (except for your candle, of course). The environment of limbo is grey and ill-defined, and deadens the senses.
- Darken the room, so that it's hard to see people clearly. Draw the curtains or dim the lights.
- Wear a mask, to hide your face. The masks should ideally be identical, so it is hard to tell each other apart. If you are able, you could enhance the effect by all wearing similar clothes (style, colour, etc). Try to avoid masks which cover your mouth, as it makes it hard to hear you speak. Alternatively you could wear face paint, or hide your faces behind hoods or dark glasses.
- You may not speak louder than a whisper, move faster than a slow walk, and your body
 movements should be slow and languid, unless you are howling with emotion (see below).
- You may not touch any object or person. Of course, your character may not immediately realise
 this. If you want to indicate that you are *trying* to touch something or someone, wave your hand
 over it or them slowly.

The fog of death

Death left you half a person. Your memories are fragmented and indistinct. Your emotions are powerful and volatile.

- When someone tells you about an event they remember from your life, you remember it. You may, however, remember the event differently, in large ways or small; and you may remember extra details or additional events connected to that one. Make a snap decision and say what you remember out loud. In turn, this may trigger the same process for other characters. You'll end up describing what happened a little at a time, perhaps agreeing with each other or perhaps diverging.
- When reacting to other people's memories, err on the side of accepting what they say and building on it. You can opt to remember things differently if your instincts tell you that's what you should do – but do not do this flippantly. What you should never do is completely ignore what the other person said, flatly denying its truth – tweak it or twist it, by all means, but your memory should be recognisable as related to their memory.
- Whatever you describe, that's your memory. Don't worry about whether it's true – it seems true to you.

What really happened?

Your memories, even the key memory, are fallible. They may differ from those of others. Even your unresolved issue isn't a trump card. Not only do other players have the right to describe events differently, the game will never tell you who was right, not even after the game has finished. There is no final truth.

Example: David reveals his key memory, when he tried to confess his love for Susie and she interrupted their conversation to take a call with her accountant. He describes how he was venting his emotions and she coldly took the call. Susie thinks for a moment and says she remembers him saying he wanted to talk about something, but that he said it "wasn't really important". Then her lawyer called about her divorce. She had to hear what her lawyer had to say, and said could it wait until later. After that it just slipped her mind.

- At the start of the game you create a dominant emotion. That feeling is with you at all times, colouring everything you hear and everything you say. It is <u>not</u> overwhelming fear does not make you a quivering wreck, anger doesn't make you fly at everyone you meet. Rather, it is omnipresent. Let it influence your interactions, but don't descend into parody.
- You may change your dominant emotion at any time. You should mainly do this in reaction to significant revelations or expressions of emotion from others. But never do this lightly.
- At times it may feel appropriate for your character to be overwhelmed by their emotion. If someone says or does something which would elicit the same emotional reaction that is currently dominant, that is a particularly appropriate time. For example, if you are dominated by fear and someone speaks to you in an aggressive way. If that happens, you may decide that you are howling with emotion. When howling with emotion, you may move at a normal pace, and you may speak at a normal volume indeed, you may find it appropriate to raise your voice. When you howl with emotion, you may not conceal your feelings, nor may you lie or otherwise present a facade. You must roleplay as open a portrayal of your character's inner thoughts and feelings as you can.

Example: When Susie tells David that he said it "wasn't really important", it plays right into his dominant emotion of Self-Pity. He decides he will howl with emotion. David sinks to his knees suddenly and cries out loud "all these years, I could never bring myself to tell you!"

Leaving limbo

When your issue has been resolved, you may blow out your candle at any time. Doing so signifies that you have accepted your death and moved on to whatever waits beyond. Before doing so, you may take off your mask (if you have one) and say a closing sentence or two – and in so doing, you make speak at normal volume (or raise your voice, if you wish). After that, your character is gone. Remove yourself from the central playing area and watch silently as the rest of the game plays out.

Equally, you may choose to stay a little longer and try to help the others move on. But beware – if your candle goes out by itself, you remain trapped in limbo even if you have resolved your issue.

Example: Lisa apologises to Shanice for stealing her brilliant ideas and using them to make herself famous. She acknowledges Shanice's brilliance and admits that her whole reputation was effectively stolen from her. Shanice's issue is resolved, but she decides to stay and try to help Lisa move on. If Lisa resolves her issue, they can both blow out their candles, but if the candles burn out they will both be trapped in limbo forever.

If your candle burns out

"We die only once, and for such a long time."

Moliere

If your candle burns out, you will be trapped in limbo forever. Your character immediately realises this and may speak one or two anguished sentences at normal volume (or louder, if you feel moved to do so) before returning to being limited to whispering. You may continue to interact with the other characters.

Example: After two hours of trying to get his tormentor to admit their guilt, Sajid's candle burns out. He points his finger at his tormentor and shrieks "I will never forgive you. May you burn in hell for eternity!"

Ending the game

The game ends when either everyone has blown out their candle or all their candles have burned out. (Or, if you're using one, the timer goes off.)

Switch the lights on and blow out any candles that are still burning.

If you have time, you may wish to discuss the game. Talk about what your character thought was going on, what your issue was and whether you resolved it. Talk about how you feel about the outcome for your character and the others.

About the author

Josh Fox is a game designer, blogger, pig-wrangler and father. He is currently focused on designing games that help you to collaboratively create stories full of secrets and mysteries. You can find Josh's writings and his games, most of which you can download for free, at www.blackarmada.com. If you played this or any of Josh's other games, email Josh – josh at vapourspace dot net – and tell him how it went.

Appendix A: Inspiration

Group concepts

Group Causes of death

Family Car/train/plane crash; fire; bombing; natural disaster

Close friends As "family" plus: suicide pact

Spiritual group As "close friends"

Lovers As "close friends"

Band As "close friends"

Soldiers As "family" plus: killed in action; executed

Criminals As "soldiers"

Aid workers As "soldiers" plus: struck down by disease

Explorers/nomads As "aid workers" plus: slain by wild beasts; killed by the elements

Unresolved issues, memories and emotions

<u>Unresolved issue</u>	Memory	Emotion	<u>Examples</u>
The repentant Needs either forgiveness or blame from the person wronged [perhaps after revealing the full scale of wrongdoing]	The act of betrayal or wrongdoing	Guilt/ Regret	Infidelity Spy Traitor Snitch Bully Betrayal Stole idea Abuser
The wronged Needs acknowledgement and/or apology from wrongdoer or to know reason for wrongdoing or to have suspicions confirmed	Witnessing/first hearing of wrongdoing	Anger/ Fear Pity	See <i>repentant</i> plus: Friend of victim
The carer Needs the cared-for to say they can or can't cope without them	Time when cared-for was totally dependent on them	Love	Parent Lover Lieutenant Muse

Mentor

The unrequited Needs to know whether or not their feelings are reciprocated	First sight of their love	Fear	Best friend Shy admirer Groupie
The seeker Needs to know the truth about a mystery in their life	When they realised they were different	Fear	Orphan/adoptee
The overlooked Needs acknowledgement of their skill, talent or contribution	When they worked hard for no reward or praise	Anger/ Envy	Underling Lieutenant Rival Partner
The abandoned Needs acknowledgement and/or apology for lack of help	When needed help and didn't get it	Anger/ Fear	Neededrescueto be believedlove

Appendix B: Materials

Candles

http://www.amazon.com/ANLENG-Superior-Quality-Tealight-Candles/dp/B0133LE7JW (50 for \$11)

http://www.amazon.com/Coghlans-8674-Emergency-Candles/dp/B0000ANBU2 (8-10 hour candles, two for \$3.50 - cut them up to make 2-hour candles)

http://www.otherwisetrading.co.uk/house/1housecandlessinglesmall.htm 35p each

Flameless candles

http://www.lights.com/premium-flameless-candles-with-timer-remote-p-37290.html Flameless candles with a 2-hour timer, 4 for \$28

http://www.amazon.com/Champagne-Flameless-Candles-Paraffin-Operated/dp/B00UV4BL12 Flameless candles with 2-hour timer, 3 for \$21

http://www.lights4fun.co.uk/i/q/CA13852/3-slim-battery-operated-wax-led-pillar-candles?gclid=Clz5zau43sgCFYhAGwodiQlGhgFlameless candles (no timer), 3 for £4.99

Masks

http://www.partycity.com/product/white+domino+mask.do (white) http://www.partycity.com/product/black+domino+mask.do (black) Domino mask, \$0.99 each

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Appendix C: Game summary

Gone but not forgotten is about ghosts. You play people who died with major issues unresolved. Now they are trapped in limbo, haunted by the emotions that dominated their lives. That is where they will stay unless they can achieve closure. Fortunately, the very people those emotions connect with are here with them.

Preamble

- 1. Light your candles and/or set your timer at the start if you have a hard time limit.
- 2. Read out the safety text and write down anything you want banned from the session.

Setup

- 3. Choose a group concept and a cause of death.
- 4. Choose your role in the group but keep it broad, don't worry about specifics.
- 5. Each of you, privately decide on an unresolved issue, a key memory and a dominant emotion. These three will probably be connected. Inspiration tables are available if you are struggling to come up with something.
- 6. If there's time, come up with up to three other memories again, keep these to yourself.
- 7. Keep your memories short and simple and focused on your character's perspective.

Game play

- 8. If you haven't lit the candle and/or set your timer yet, do it now. Turn off the lights. If you're using masks or other props, you should put those on before starting.
- 9. You must speak no louder than a whisper, move no faster than a slow walk, and keep your movements slow and languid.
- 10. You may not touch each other, or any object besides your candle. You may indicate you are trying to touch something by waving your hands over it <u>slowly</u>.
- 11. When someone describes a memory, make a snap decision whether you remember it and, if so, whether your memory differs. Say out loud what you remember, if anything. Err on the side of accepting their memory, and don't deny the memory outright.
- 12. Whatever you decide is what you remember don't worry whether it's true.
- 13. Roleplay your dominant emotion as though ever-present but not overwhelming in its power. Let it influence and colour your interactions.
- 14. You can change your dominant emotion in response to events.
- 15. If you feel it appropriate, e.g. when events really play into your dominant emotion, you may *howl with emotion*. You can briefly speak at normal volume or louder, and move at normal speed. When you do this, you cannot lie or conceal your feelings.
- 16. If your candle burns out you are trapped in limbo. You may speak a couple of anguished sentences at normal volume or louder, then continue the game.
- 17. If you resolve your issue, you can blow out your candle. When you do so you can take your mask off (if you have one) and say a couple of sentences at normal volume or louder. Then leave the play area and watch the rest of the game silently.
- 18. You don't have to blow out your candle, but if it burns out after you resolved your issue, you are still trapped in limbo.

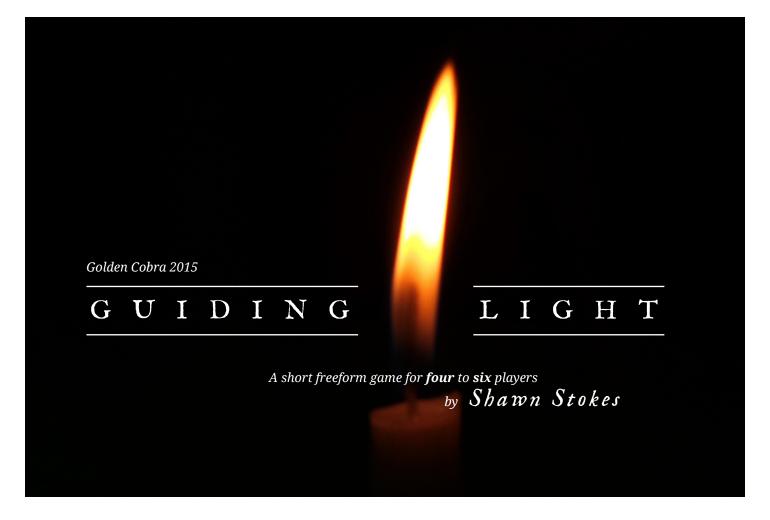
End game

19. Once all candles are out, the game is over. Discuss what happened if there's time.

GUIDING LIGHT

BY SHAWN STOKES

Guiding light is an American freeform style game about depression that is meant evoke thought and empathy for the daily struggles that depression causes sufferers.



Introduction

GUIDING LIGHT is a freeform game about depression and the clouded thoughts, ideas, and indecision that comes with it. I was heavily inspired by *Exile* and *White Death* when I conceived this game. This game concept and play was stimulated by my own personal struggles with depression, among the other depression-related problems. This game requires only a light facilitator role; someone who's read the text and brought materials for play.

Each player will be taking on the role of a voice in a person's mind. Each player has a candle they can light off the central candle. Play involves players lighting candles off each others candles, the center candle, and blowing them out. If the center candle is ever blown out, the game ends, signifying that a decision was put off, being delayed or entirely avoided.

Requirements

- One slender and long unscented candle per player (to be held in the hand)
- One large and stout unscented candle (placed in the center of the table)
- A tablecloth or paper towels (something disposable or cleanable, as wax may drip on this)
- A lighter, torch, or matches
- · A copy of each of the voice cards
- A table suitable for your group
- · A vessel of water just in case
- · A small ventilated room that can be very dark
- · One to two hours

Warm Ups

• Facilitator, lead these exercises. Set the table as appropriate with candles, lighters, and whatever wax catching objects you have selected. Sit around the table.

GUIDING LIGHT explores very personal states of emotion; therefore participation come from a place of love, respect, and acceptance. If players feel uncomfortable with depicting depressive motivation and self-talk base in personal experience, then this game may not be for them. This game will most likely involve touching and will be required to be in close proximity to other players as well. Make sure to discuss personal boundaries before proceeding!

CHECK IN

Check in with your players on a personal level before jumping into warm ups. Ask them a few questions (answer yourself after they are done):

- · How was your day?
- How are you feeling?
- · Anything notable you want to share?

SILENCE

Close your eyes and listen to the ambient noise of the room. Do not speak or move. Follow an ambient noise around.

• Facilitator, take eighteen slow breaths before moving onto the discussion.

DISCUSSION

• Facilitator, guide the group through the following questions.

Each player is going to share there answers to some questions. When you are ready to answer, light the central candle and begin talking, in as much detail as you feel comfortable sharing. The rest of us will light our candles off of the central candle when we feel that we have experienced something similar. When you are done talking, blow out the central candle, and we'll blow out ours. Then we will move on to another player and repeat the process until we've answered all of the questions. It's okay for our answers to be short and simple, but give us some time to consider and relate to your answer before blowing out the central candle.

QUESTIONS:

- Do any of the players know or have experience with depression?
- · What are your observations or experiences?
- What did you notice or how did you feel?
- What were your daily routines like? What basic things did you have difficulty doing?

Play

• Facilitator, read this aloud.

As a group, let's brainstorm some basic daily situations that might be challenging for a person with depression. It's okay to reuse things we mentioned during the warm up. These do not be to be complicated; mundane tasks that most people perform routinely are perfectly fine. Speak whatever comes to mind, and try to come up with at least two, but if you can't, that's ok. We may not need them all anyway.

Claim a narrow candle. Notice where the central candle is, and where the tablecloths are to catch the wax. Notice also where the stack of Voice Cards are; we will need to draw from this stack. We will take turns presenting a basic daily task that we need to address or ignore, and for each task we will each draw a Voice Card and speak for the voices described there. After each task is resolved, we will shuffle the Voice Cards and draw new voices. Notice where the vessel of water is. We are using actual fire, so pay extra attention to where everything is, and than pay extra attention again to where everything is so we can be safe and responsible.

LIGHT

 Facilitator, explain the following.
 Soon we will each draw a voice card, and speak for those Voices.

When your candle is out, you may not speak.

When you light your candle from the central candle, you may speak for your Voice. You will be speaking alone about a basic daily task. Advocate for your Voice. Hide nothing. No other player may light off the central flame until this task has been resolved or avoided.

Once a task has been introduced, and another player's candle has been lit from the central flame, you may now initiate a dialogue by lighting your candle from that player's flame. You may not light from the central candle once a task has been introduced. During the dialogue you may or may not be heard by the other Voices, but you should speak regardless.

If your Voice disagrees with the current direction of the ongoing dialogue between the active Voices then you may blow out the Voice's candles and end the discussion. Do not blow out the central candle. Once you do, light your candle off of the central candle and begin the discussion about this task anew. Each player may blow out the candles three times, on the fourth time they must blow out the central candle instead, followed by the other players candles, which ends the game. Count your ability to extinguish on your other hand beneath the table.

Once we have all gone silent, though the central candle is still lit, we may assume that we have reached a decision regarding this task. We will now embark upon a new task, introduced by a new player, by the same process, until the central candle is extinguished. Each player's ability to extinguish is renewed with each new task.

• Facilitator, turn the lights off, light the central candle, and invite the players to light their candle and begin once they have a task in mind. And instruct the following.

Draw a Voice Card; when you speak you will speak for the interests of this Voice. Inhale deeply. Exhale slowly, release your worries, your stress. Close your eyes and embrace the Voice. Once you have embodied the Voice, open your eyes. Once all eyes are open the game will start.

The game ends whenever the central candle is extinguished.

Debrief

• Facilitator, once your in your new area, guide them through the following.

Extinguish candles, leave them on the tablecloth, open the doors, and leave the play space for a brighter area. Don't take any play material with you except this text.

- Thank you for playing!
- Close your eyes, inhale slowly and exhale deliberately.
 Release the Voices you spoke for, and the resulting conversations.
- Remind everyone that we all played fictional roles, and that we should not hold play events against each other.
 The game is over.
- What was your experience like? What moments were the most real to you?
- How did the things said by other players resonate with your own experiences of depression?
- Did those statements and behaviors relate to the behaviors you've seen in others?
- Were there any voices that were unfamiliar to your experience of depression? What was different?
- Is it possible to speak against those Voices, for yourself or for others? In what small ways can you do that?

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- Tayler Stokes
- Jay Sylvano
- · Jefferson Lee
- · Games to Gather
- The Game Garden





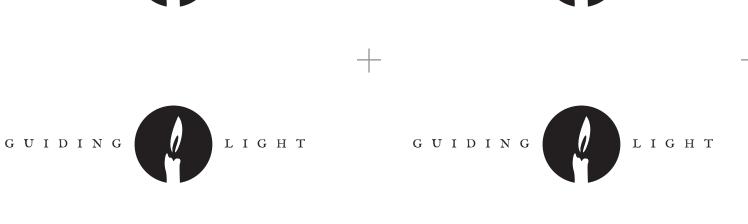
Contact

• If you have questions or comments about this game, please feel free to contact the designer - Shawn Stokes: cuckoococoon@gmail.com









Guilt

"I'm to blame and we all know it."

Fatigue

"What time is it? Ugh, it's not even worth it."

Anxiety

"This is such a mess. What will they think? This is to much..."

Paranoia

"Quit watching me. Just stop."

Procrastination

"Why even bother?"

Negligence

"It's not like it will make a difference anyway."

Shame

"What would they think if they knew?"

Self-Loathing

"I'm worthless; why would anybody want anything to do with me anyway?"

Despair

"I can't handle things getting any worse, it's already too much."

Self-pity

"Why does this have to happen to me?"

Resentment

"The world is such an awful place. They know exactly what they are doing, too."

Disgust

"Everything is ugly."

HALLOWEEN SURVIVAL GUIDE

BY JAY TREAT

Halloween Survival Guide is a freeform game you can play while you greet trick or treaters on Halloween... and at no other time. Children are people-eating monsters and reveal their true appearance only on Halloween, when they stalk the neighborhoods for prey. Candy is the key to surviving this dangerous night, but it has weird and powerful effects on our emotions.

PALLOWEEN SURVIVAL GUIDE

For one or more hopeful survivors of Halloween

One night every year, the children of the world shed their innocent guises and reveal their true selves: These monsters roam neighborhoods, searching for helpless adults to feed their endless hunger. Mercifully, we have found that a common household chemical—sugar, of all things—numbs their murderous ravening.

You can avoid a grisly fate through preparation and common sense, but you'll need to keep your wits to do it. Read on to learn how to prevent panic and handle monster encounters with a cool head.

Plan Ahead



You will need to prepare your home to receive trick-or-treaters; scary decorations and creepy music soothe these little monsters, but most particularly, you will need a bag or so of candy of more than one type. Place the candy in an area where all survivors can see and access it.

Share Secrets RESECRETS

Each of you is an adult; a human who has passed the age of monsterhood. Each of you must complete the four following actions during the night, but can do so at any time, in any order, at any pace. (If you're going to die anyhow, why rush?)

- * Reveal your most favorite candy. Eat one.
- * Reveal your most despised (or least favorite) candy. Make someone else eat one.
- * Reveal your greatest Halloween fear. There is a monster that exists to terrify each of us, preying on our deepest insecurity.
- * Tell the harrowing tale of a past Halloween that went terribly wrong for you.

WE ALL DIE SOME TIME

Answer the Door



Greet trick-or-treaters. If you don't, they will kill you. But when you do, you'll become scared. One monster scares you **once**. Multiple monsters scare you **twice**, regardless of the number in their group. Whether you are the one to greet them or not, each group of monsters that includes your greatest fear scares you an **additional time**.

Eat Candy



Childish though it may seem, eating candy is an important Halloween survival tactic. It's impossible to cope naturally with all the fear monsters inspire, and you risk long-term neurological damage—as well as a potentially fatal heart attack—trying. Sugar chemically transforms human fear into a variety of less dangerous emotions. Whenever something scares you, eat a piece of candy. The force of emotion behind your fear won't disappear, but it is diverted.

Your favorite candy turns fear into a positive emotion while other candy is less pedictable. The candy you despise turns fear into a different negative emotion—which is less than ideal, but still better than the alternative.

Such emotions remain until you experience a new one that contradicts them. Behaviors are forgotten after they are satisfied, or if ongoing, until you experience a strong positive emotion.

emotions that candy transforms your fear into					
FAVORITE CANDY	other candies		DESPISED CANDY		
JOY LOVE AMUSEMENT SERENITY ECSTASY	LUST DETACHMENT ANXIOUS GIDDINESS APPREHENSION	awe optimism numbness boredom	GRIEF DESPAIR ANGER DISGUST REMORSE		
AMAZEMENT	admiration	annoyance	Paranoia		

Affects of Pure Fear

Whenever you fail to eat a piece of candy when something scares you, your mind copes by adopting a negative behavior, such as:

- * Trying to hoard or hide candy for your own self-preservation.
- * Trying to scare other adults.
- * Forcing an adult who is not ready to volunteer to answer the door.

Take Care of Each Other

You'll be going through some pretty weird stuff. If you've got someone there with you, don't try to handle it alone. Talk to each other. Work out the wild emotions you're dealing with. Pat someone's back. Give as many hugs as you can.

If one adult demonstrates understanding and empathy for another—and reassures them through physical contact—the soothed adult is calmed, relieving the recipient of the most negative emotion or behavior currently affecting them.

Keep Cool O NOT PANIC

Monsters are a sensitive lot. If you startle them or make them cry, they will become angry and will likely kill you and everyone else. It's hard, but you must *try* to suppress your emotions when greeting monsters: Treat them kindly and calmly. Should someone fail in this, **hide**. If no other monsters come to your door within 10 minutes, it's because they smell that you've already been killed; You're all dead, ghosts lingering until you accept the fate that was too traumatic for you to recall. If other monsters do come within 10 minutes, you have somehow escaped the previous monsters' wrath, you lucky fools.

Death may be an end, but it is not release. It is a grisly, lingering, soul-wrenching end. Do everything to avoid it.



Rationalization is Healthy

That monsters are real is terrifying and incredible. That our own children are monsters in disguise is disturbing and unbelievable. That they reveal themselves once a year and hunt openly through the streets is a trauma so horrible that it strains belief. But it's *true*. It's undeniably true. We don't talk about it the rest of the year... It's too much for us to handle. We just bury it down, deep below our psyches, until the next year—the night when we struggle merely to survive and cannot spare the strength to accept our reality, much less to discuss it.

That leads to a lot of unexplained disparities, of course. "I haven't seen our neighbors in months." "Oh, I think they moved." "Without saying goodbye?" "They must have. They must have moved in the middle of the night." "How odd." And so we rationalize. You will find yourself dealing with contradictions tonight. It's okay. Find an explanation for them, no matter how tenuous, and choose to believe it. This is not failure. This is humanity. Do what you *need* to keep yourself together tonight—lie, drink, dance yourself to distraction—because not everyone will survive, and panicking will not help your odds.



As eating a great deal of candy is a terrible idea, you will want to **stop actually eating candy** at some point. You can hide a piece of candy instead.

Violence is terrible, and consent is vital. If there is conflict between adults—or romance—agree on a safe action to represent the event, rather than acting something out that may cause someone harm, physical or emotional.

Avoiding the vicious kind of death that monsters promise is stressful. If anyone needs a break, **give them space** to be alone for a while. **Everyone is welcome to leave** at any time, with or without explanation. If you don't intend to return, please let someone know, so that the rest of the adults aren't tempted to brave the near-certain fate that awaits them outdoors trying to find you.

Good luck.

JAY TREAT 2015

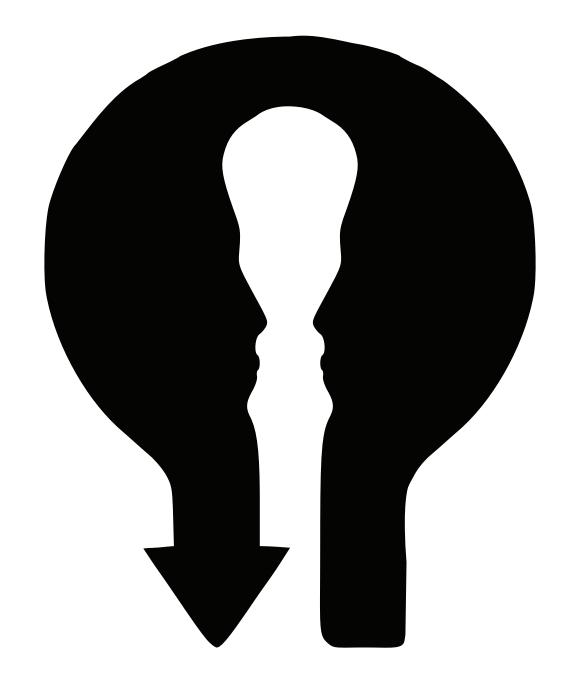
HER INNER DEAD ENDS (HIDE)

BY FRANCESCO SEDDA AND FRANCESCO ZANI

Her Inner Dead Ends is a freeform larp scenario for two players taking the role of two users of an online community dedicated to a fictional multimedia franchise that is closing and focuses on their first live meeting.

MOST POLISHED AND READY-TO-PLAY GAME

Her Inner Dead Ends



A freeform larp scenario for two players created by Francesco Zani and Francesco "Rugerfred" Sedda about a fictional franchise for many people created by J. S. Hunts

Introduction:

Her Inner Dead Ends is a freeform larp scenario for two players taking the role of two users of an online community dedicated to a fictional multimedia franchise that is closing and focuses on their first live meeting.

What happens when the community disappears and the connections are severed? What feelings are involved when the medium is abruptly taken away? What's next?

The game should be played in a cozy and peaceful public space: a bar, a pub or a restaurant are great for this purpose.

The game require very little preparation and a printed copy of the handouts (Message from the Admin, Hiding Cards and Community Cards).

Inspirations:

- · Time (xkcd)
- · The Forge
- · Reddit, Chan, forums and communities in general
- · Janus Design
- Firefly
- · S., by Doug Dorst and J. J. Abrams
- · .hack franchise
- · The Climb by Jason Morningstar
- · The Beekeper by Mel Leverich
- · Serpent of ash by J. Tuomas Harviainen
- · A Penny for my Thoughts by Paul Tevis
- · Microscope by Ben Robbins
- · 24 game poems by Marc Majcher
- Her Story
- · Cloud Chamber
- · Zero Escape series

Thanks:

Thanks to Angela Manna, Flavio Mortarino and Monica Neddi for their precious feedback.

The Franchise:

"The Many Paths Series" is a transmedial franchise started with the "Her Inner Dead Ends" novel. The franchise gained many fans since the publication of the first novel and a lot of users gathered in the official HIDE community thanks to the unconventional and stratified narrative, innovativeness in the use of transmediality and cryptic mysteries.

The series is famous for allegorical sections, stories prone to multiple interpretation and open-ended storylines that encouraged the fans to create a vast repertoire of theories.

Since the cancellation of the HIDE animation series nothing new has been created in the Many Paths franchise and many hypothesized that the author might have lost interest in the whole project.

J. S. Hunt is a hugely appreciated novelist, critic, essayist, musician and movie director. He is mostly known for the franchise "The Many Paths" for which he wrote a total of 7 novels and directed 2 movie adaptations. Even if he's widely recognized as one of the most eclectic creative minds of the last century, with projects spanning all media, he is notoriously reclusive: very few photographs of him have ever been published and many rumors about his location and identity have circulated.

In the franchise:

- · Her Inner Dead Ends (novel)
- Weak End (novel)
- The House of Veiled Walls (novel)
- · The Square and the Circle (prequel novella)
- One Thousand Boxes (novel)
- · His Inner Dead Ends (novel spin off)
- Her Inner Dead Ends (movie)
- HIDE (graphic novel)
- Better than Ever (novel)
- Weak End (movie)
- · Behind the Curtain: and what she found (ARG)
- · Your Own Dead Ends HIDErpg (pen & paper RPG)
- Just Another Fall (novel)
- Just Another Fall (music concept album)
- HIDE (movie remake)
- HIDE: The Hidden Path (TV animation series)

The Community:

The HIDE community was officially opened about ten years ago as a place to talk, debate and theorize about the hidden meanings of the franchise. In the middle of its life it became less easy to approach the community, due to the amount of source material produced in the franchise and from the user theories, but the influx of new users kept growing. In the last three years the lack of new material convinced the publishers to pull the plug in a short time, but nobody is prepared to deal with this: users keep posting daily discussions, crafting new theories and introducing people to the franchise, but the end of the HIDE community is near and unavoidable. What's discomforting in the imminent closure is not only the necessity to re-group and re-organize somewhere else with such a short notice, but also the news that no backup will be kept and every content will be wiped at its closure. Ten years of theories, discussions, friendships flushed away forever.

The Main Characters:

The two main characters of the scenario are two users of the HIDE community. They met each other online and have become friends: for quite a while they have discussed, fantasized and theorized together. Now, discovered that the community is about to close, they decided to organize a live meeting and give a face to each other's nickname, finally knowing who they are away from keyboard.

Principles:

Think about how The Many Paths speaks to you:

Play trying to describe which aspects of the franchise convey emotions to your character, what makes them think and empowers their creativity. Describe how the franchise speaks to your character. What triggers your interest in this franchise? What evokes your emotions?

Think about how The Many Paths speaks about the other character:

There is something in the person in front of you that reminds you of the franchise. You should question why this is true and try to understand the reasons behind it: what elements in the franchise that remembers you of them? What do you recognise about them in the franchise?

Think about the community:

The characters must not speak uniquely about the series but should try to speak also about the community. Think about unsolved questions regarding the community: where will the newcomers to the franchise learn about all the theories and the contents created over the years? How will they experience the franchise now that the main gathering place is about to disappear? Wasn't it a foundamental part of the huge project of the franchise to create a community and to develop around it?

Think about what comes after the end:

Remember to think what projects for the future your character might have. This scenario doesn't aim at answering that question during the game, but thinking about it will enrich the experience and it can help you in the dialogue with the other character. What will happen to the characters after this meeting?

Focus on the experience, more than on the story:

Don't force yourself to create a narration built upon a chain of memories following one another, but use the scenario to explore your emotions about this kind of experience: what did you discuss on the community and how does it make you feel? What kind of alchemy you and the other character had?

Do it together:

It's of extreme importance that you both contribute elements to the narration. There's no prevalent narrator and there should never be: if you notice that the other player is having difficulty in the creation of the narrative content, help him by asking some questions and whenever the other player suggests something try to build on it. Always make the other player's character shine: if you do, you will both have a better experience.

Game mechanics:

Both players should read and familiarize with this section before they get to the table, so that you can both enjoy the game without stressing about not knowing what to do or explaining the rules during the game itself. The following will guide you through the mechanics that you'll need to know. There are few mechanics, but all of them are fundamental.

Community Cards:

Throughout the game the players will mostly talk to each other trying to explore what kept the community united, the events your characters can recall about it, what are the feelings they link to those experiences, to the members of the community and to their future projects. In order to do this you'll have the support of the Community Cards.

This deck represents some users and things they said during the time the two protagonists frequented the HIDE community: you will be using them as an inspiration for the discussion. Your character doesn't have to remember exactly the nickname or the words of any of the users represented so, while you certainly can directly quote any of them as you see fit, you can also vaguely describe an episode that leads to that specific card. You can read the cards on the table during the game, but do not focus on them too much: when you figure out something to say, find a card on the table that might convey that message and start telling that story.

Reverse & Destroy:

Reversing and destroying cards is what controls the game flux during its execution and will determine its end. Reversing a card on the table is an act of acceptation by both players of whatever that card represents for their relationship. Destroying a card, on the opposite, is an act of refusal.

When you used a card to talk about something and both players believe there is nothing more to say on the matter, you can:

- · reverse it, placing the card face down on the table, if you think that the talk you had was a bonding experience.
- destroy it, tearing it into small pieces, if you think that the talk you had was a detachment experience.

When a card is reversed the other player can decide to leave it as is or have a chance to disagree with you and destroy the card, making his dissent clear.

What are you hiding?

The Hiding Cards are a small group of cards specifying what you, as a character, cannot speak about. At the beginning of the game you will choose one of these that you would like to adopt for the current game and it will represent a very personal aspect of your character. Choose something that intrigues you and from which you can take inspiration: if you fear that you will not use a card during the game, then don't choose it. Whenever you have chosen take that card place it covered in front of you on the table. Whatever it is that you have chosen remember to avoid explicitely mentioning anything about that topic, but act as it is an important part of who you are.

The topic mentioned on the card can be lightly referred to but it can never be talked about openly. Don't miss the occasion to make some reference to whatever it is and drop some hints about it.

Even if you cannot talk about your respective topics, they will give you some backstory to who the characters are so you can build upon.

Take the Hand:

Whenever one of you feels like there's something they want to express in game that they don't want their character to speak out, they can touch the hand of the other player and share that thought. Whatever the players say in that occasion is something that the characters are thinking but not telling, so it should be considered as not said by the characters in-game.

For this, try to keep your hands on the table during the game, so that the other player can easily make hand contact.

What's embarassing for your character to say at the first meeting with someone else? What are they afraid of sharing, even with the best of their friends? Do you think something about your character should be shared, but you don't want to say it out loud? Do you feel the need to talk about your Hiding Card's topic? If so, take the hand of the other character and start the flow of your thoughts.

Closing sequence:

When every Communiy Card is reversed or destroyed, the game should come to an end: conclude the current subject and take the hands of the other player. Look at the destroyed and at the reversed cards on the table and then look the other player for one last time, then close your eyes.

Now collect your thoughts: how was the meeting? The relationship has deepened, or has been damaged by this event? Do you want to keep the relationship even after the closure of the community, or is it better that everyone takes their own path? After some thought, decide:

- · open your eyes, if you want to keep the relationship after the closure of the community.
- · disconnect your hands if you want to break the relationship after the closure. If both players open their eyes, your characters will be in touch in the future. If even one of you disconnects the hands, your characters will take their own separate paths.

Debrief:

Have a small debrief process after the end of the game

Talk freely about your characters, their change during the game and how the game ended. Why it ended that way? There is something untold about your characters? What feelings you experienced during the game?

Game preparation:

You can execute this sequence right at the table, after everything else is ready to play. This is the part where players think about the themes they will bring in the game and create the necessary mood to play. Feel free to start ahead of time with this section: the more you'll think about this, the more you'll probably have to share at the right moment. Think about your previous experiences with forums, online communities and any face-to-face meeting you had with people you knew only from an online community. Which memories do you link to all of these? Which disappointments? How the community where you participated more actively was? Which kind of users you met online? What do you don't know about them? Try to visualize people, memories and events that can help you in the game.

This ideal lenght of this phase is about ten minutes, but feel free to spend all the time you like remembering people and episodes. Try to incorporate something you remembered and you care about in the game itself, it'll make the experience more personal.

Now think about your character: what have been their first impressions about the other character? What might be their expectations about the meeting? What do they imagine about the person they are about to meet? How they think they will look like? How did they get to know the franchise and how they were influenced by it? Is there any other reason you want to meet them?

Try to answer or at least have an idea of some possibilities to address these questions. Then think about a nickname you'd like to adopt for yourself and share it with the other participant: write it on a nametag.

Now place the Hiding Cards on the table: each of you must choose one of them to be a topic they'll be forbidden to talk about out loud. Is there any of these cards that really catches your eyes or contains a theme you would like to talk about? Chosing something that triggers your emotions will enrich the experience for both players.

Start thinking about the card you choose and how this might show in your character's behavior and words and remember that you can't talk about it directly.

Now decide with your fellow player whether you want to play the short or the long format. The short format involves 16 Community Cards and will take about an hour to play out. The long format involves 25 Community Cards and will double the time needed for a playthrough. Now extract the corresponding number of cards from the Community deck and position these cards face up on the table. You will not need the rest of the deck.

Take some time to read all the Community Cards on the table: is there any connection with what you just remembered about your previous experience? Is there anything that you find particularly interesting, evocative, or that links with any of your experiences?

Keep these suggestions in mind because you will be using them during the game.

Game walkthrough:

Before you get to the table:

- · Print a copy of the handouts (Admin's Message, Hiding Cards and Community Cards).
- · Read and understand this manual.

Opening sequence:

- · Place the Admin's Message on the table and read it together.
- Each of the players chooses one of the Hiding Cards and place it covered in front of themselves. The remaining Hiding Cards will not be used.
- · Choose the short or the long format and extract the corresponding number of cards, 16 or 25, from the Community Deck. Position these cards face up on the table and read them together. The remaining Community Cards will not be used.

During the game:

- · Choose a Community Cards to start a topic and, when you feel the topic should be closed, reverse or destroy the card.
- · Remember to keep your hands on the table and use the "Take the Hand" every time you don't want to speak out loud about something.
- · Try to follow the principles of the game.

Closing sequence:

- · When all the Community Cards are either reversed of destroyed, you can begin the "Closing Sequence".
- · Have a short debrief session.

Message from the Admin:

Hi everybody,

from the beginning this community was always intended as an evolving experience, not only a place where every fan of JSH's work could come and discuss what they think of it with people as passionate as them, but also a place where the franchise itself could expand and improve through the contribution of its fans.

Here's something for you: the HIDE community went live ten years ago. I just ran some math about that: if the entire existence of the community spans but a single day, then today is 11:55 PM. If you prefer the metaphor of a single year, it's currently 4 PM on December 30.

Yeah, you perfectly understand what I'm implying: the official closure is set. I aim to move to the final stage over the coming week. That sucks, but that's it: everything comes to an end sooner or later. Cool internet communities included.

Let me be clear: it's not that the higher ups don't see what we've accomplished here, but just a fact: JSH didn't create anything in the last three years, after the cancellation of the animated series. The publisher has pulled the plug, there isn't anything here to justify the economic expenses of this whole enterprise.

For those who are wondering what will remain, there's unfortunately a good chance that "nothing" might be the most accurate answer. Not here, and certainly not in this form, anyway.

This is my last official post here. My only thought for all of you: don't lose contacts with one another. All the time we spent here has been amazing and I will sincerely miss many of your daily rants.

I've been passing through JSH works again in the last week in order to get in the right mood for this post, so let me indulge in that feeling and close with the last phrase of the first novel:

<<She was finally free from those walls. There were better days to come.>>

My best HIDERs, HawaiianPattern

Hiding Cards:

Your importance in the community.			
Your hate for the administration of the community.			
Your addiction to the community.			
Your love for another user in the community.			
The secondary account you're using.			
Your failed suicide attempt.			
The harassment you received.			
Your personal correspondence via mail with JSH about the franchise.			
You were a collaborator for one of the installment in the franchise.			

Bonus:

This card alters the game experience, shifting part of the discussions and probably influencing the decisions you'll have to make during the course of the scenario. We don't suggest to use it during your first run of this game and, if one of you chooses to use it, both players should agree.

You are J. S. Hunt.

Community Cards:

DeadlyPhysicist:

"It is blatant that the author imagined exactly this: people who gather and try to figure out what's the meaning of HIDE, if there is any."

BoxOpener:

"The most interesting side of the ending of the book is that everyone can interpret it freely. Everyone finds the best meaning."

WatcHOwISOar:

"This franchise is so extraordinary that the world will totally remember it in the centuries to come. Some things never die."

AsProven:

"The main character has an ambiguous behavior? What is ambiguous? Because if we define ambiguous what is not normal, then we are all ambiguous."

GlitchElement:

"I believe that nowadays this stuff has lost its sense. In the beginning everything was simpler..."

FinalSpin:

"What kind of guy can do what JSH does? What life does he have? No human can excel at so many things at once!"

DruMMerking:

"The concept album truly is what made me want to read all of the novels. Will there ever be anything as good as this?"

FaceUrDoom:

"Is there really any meaning to all of these discussions? I mean, let's face it, we'll never get to know WHY she did what she did."

//beelzebub//:

"I'm still trying to figure out what I wanna do in life, just like Her. I guess with time I'll be able to focus more on what I want."

AmAiErAn:

"Everytime she is pushed to make a difficult choice she runs away... JSH, what's your point exactly?!"

Kahileeeee:

"I'm not a fan of the bad guys, but at least there they are honest and upfront about what they believe."

ExecuteOrder66:

"Poppin' in to say I just finished watching the reboot movie: WTF was that bullshit about the expectations of society?!? That's lame."

Dong-ma-99:

"The day creating stuff with you guys will stop being fun I'll stop caring about what's right or wrong about our theories."

CTANKEP:

"I never cryied like that, NEVER. She keeps losing friends one after another. Come on, REACT!"

Lecercle:

"The spin-off is a masterpiece. The focus on secondary characters was brilliant: everyday drama is more interesting than epic drama."

SchwachEnde:

"Am I the only one that noticed how the RPG tries to ignore some key events in history? Do they really think that erasing the past is a good thing?"

Hylja-hylja:

"The soundtrack of the film is amazing: it makes me feel less alone even on public transport. Is it just me?"

Deuteronomicon:

"The game wasn't bad: it allowed the user to interact and to choose. And when you decide what really matters, everything is more interesting."

Ozymandias:

"Everything has an expiration date: something you once loved, now just annoys you. Nothing lasts forever."

PiccadillyCitruz:

"If you keep saying that you don't have time you'll never accomplish anything. If you never rest, on the other hand, it's just autodestruction."

PrescriptionGlasses:

"Love is to make decisions that consider another person before considering yourself. Surely isn't what she did in the third book."

Dayoff/Dayon:

"There's no amount of selfrighteousness that can make you think doing THAT to another person is the best way of solving the problem!"

Anonymous-6739210:

"I am pretty confident that JSH hates this community. He doesn't care about our opinion: he just wanted to create something."

Anonymous-7417903:

"I never thought anybody would get the reference to the "Faust" in the second book. Knowledge and pleasure aren't everything."

Anonymous-5377156:

"Fame gets to your head fast! One second you're loving something and the second after you're just trying to please strangers."

Anonymous-1407990:

"It's not the amount of resources you drop into something that makes it great, it's about you beeing ok with losing parts of it."

Anonymous-3402884:

"To all those arguing about continuity errors I'll say this: sometimes you need to step back to comprehend the bigger picture."

Anonymous-4603009:

"In a labyrinth if you walk long enough you can always find your way to the centre: I want to talk about that walk."

HERE COMES A CANDLE

BY LAURA WOOD

A resistance group against a totalitarian dictatorship have until dawn, one hour, to decide which of their members will die. A story about love and duty.

Some of you have never known any different. Some of you remember what it was like before. All of you have witnessed the horrors of the totalitarian authority after they took power. So you resisted. Quietly and subtly at first; and then as you found each other you began to make bolder moves.

Newsletters, stories, graffiti, memorials for the dead. You became a family.

You got caught.

In a prison cell together you were offered a deal. If one person confesses to being the leader of the resistance movement that person will die. The rest of you will go free. Back to your children. Back to your lives. Back to continue the fight. Only one person needs to die at dawn.

You have one hour to decide who.

This is a LARP about survival, duty and love.



Here Comes a Candle

Introduction

- 1. Game setting
- 2. Mood and themes
- 3. Set up
- 4. The role of the facilitator

'Here comes a candle to light you to bed, And here comes a chopper to chop off your head.'

Warm up exercises and safety techniques

- 1. Explaining the scenario
- 2. Lines and veils
- 3. Exercise to demonstrate brake and cut

Character Creation

- 1. Beginning character creation
- 2. Creating a shared world
- 3. Creating the resistance
- 4. Soundtrack / time warnings
- 5. The last choice

The Game

- 1. The beginning
- 2. The middle
- 3. The end

Debrief

- 1. As the game finishes
- 2. Group discussion
- 3. Discussion of character sheets

Appendices

- 1. Character sheets
- 2. Reasons to live
- 3. Personality traits
- 4. Reasons to die
- 5. Confession

Traditional children's rhyme

'If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face — forever.'

George Orwell - Nineteen Eighty-Four

Written by: Laura Wood

With thanks to: Mo Holkar for help and support.

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To Karolina Soltys and Mo Holkar for attempting a playtest of this at **The Game Kitchen** design day where I first came up with the idea and started developing it on scraps of paper.

To Andrew, Helen, Eunice, Warren, Grant and Jamie for assisting with either playtesting or facilitating.

Here Comes a Candle

A game for 4 players

1) Introduction

Game Setting

The players have input into the setting of the game but you are living in dark times. People are dying because the government or power or regime don't like them, probably because they're too smart or too inquisitive or too likely to fight. All the characters will have personally witnessed deaths, seen people 'disappear', and seen the after effect of the torture that the government has inflicted.

Mood and Themes

The mood is a dark one. The characters, members of the resistance, have been caught and put into a prison. They have one hour to decide who to put forward as their leader and if one person confesses at the end of the hour to being the leader then that person is executed alone. If more than one person confesses, or no-one confesses, the whole group die. The prison is inescapable. The guard(s) are watching. **There is no third option.**

Set up

You will need

- Character sheets -print 2 sided (appendix 1)
- Reasons to live (appendix 2)
- Personality traits (appendix 3)
- Reasons to die (appendix 4)
- Leader's confession (appendix 5).
- Scissors
- Either sticky tape or blue tack
- 4 scarves or blindfolds

You will need a makeshift prison which can be set up with tables and chairs, lines of chalk drawn on the ground, banners tied to trees or whatever seems appropriate.

Inside the prison there should be a maximum of 2 chairs (none is completely acceptable) to encourage movement. There should be a 'door', an area that is easy for the guard but not the prisoners to enter and exit.

There is an audio app which goes with this game which is free to download from Google Play at https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.laura.despotlarp To start the track slide the switch at the top of the screen. The app should be started after the game has started. Read the soundtrack section to see what to expect when using the app.

The role of the facilitator

The main role of the facilitator is to **ensure the physical and emotional safety of everyone in the room**. There are warm up exercises and a debrief but for the hour that the game is running, with the exception of the execution which takes place on the hour, the facilitator's role is mainly to watch and prevent anyone attempting to take another option (e.g. escaping).

The facilitator also has to set up people's expectations and ensure that new and inexperienced players are drawn into the narrative. This can be done by asking specific questions during character creation.

2) Warm up exercises and safety techniques

Explaining the scenario

The first step is to explain the scenario to the group if they're not already aware of it

'All of you have witnessed the horrors of the totalitarian authority after they took power. You have seen pain and you all have personally witnessed deaths, seen people disappear and seen the after effect of the torture that the government has inflicted. Maybe some of you were tortured. Maybe you lost friends or loved ones. So you began to form a resistance group. Quietly and subtly at first; and then as you found each other you began to make bolder moves. Newsletters, stories, graffiti, memorials for the dead. You became like a family.

You got caught.

In a prison cell together you were offered a deal. If one person confesses to being the leader of the resistance movement, that person will die at dawn. The rest of you will go free. Back to your children. Back to your lives. Back to continue the fight. Only one person needs to die. If more than one person confesses, or if no-one confesses, you will all die. The prison cell is not bugged – it was not considered necessary. You have one hour to decide what to do.'

Lines and Veils

Lines are things that must not occur in your game and **veils** are things which can be alluded to but can't happen explicitly, for example you may 'fade to black' for that moment. If you are playing with a new group who don't know each other very well it might be preferable to give them a piece of paper and ask them to write down their lines and veils and pass them to you. For example, a line might be that no sexual violence occurs or is alluded to in game and a veil might be that any violent confrontations are described 'I punched him and kicked him when he fell to the floor', rather than role-played.

Exercise to demonstrate brake and cut

There are two purposes to this exercise. One is to demonstrate how brake and cut work and get players comfortable with using them if necessary. **Brake** is used when the player is happy with the intensity of a scene but doesn't want it to get any more intense. **Cut** is used to stop the scene until the issue is resolved. The other purpose is to assess the players' comfort with blindfolds as they will be used later on. Ask if the players are OK to be blindfolded, and if anyone says no, tell them they will be able to just close their eyes instead. The players should split into pairs and one should blindfold the other and lead them at a slowly increasing pace around the area. When the player is at a comfortable pace they say 'brake' and the person who is leading them doesn't go any faster. At some point, relatively shortly afterwards they say 'cut' and the players stop and swap with the previously leading player now blindfolded.

Once the exercise has ended bring everyone back in a circle. Ask each person to define one of 'line', 'veil' 'brake', 'cut' and what to do if someone says it. Also introduce an additional safety rule, 'the door is open'. Although the characters are trapped in a prison in the game, in actuality if they need to leave the game for any reason they can and it won't impact on anyone else's enjoyment.

3) Character Creation

Beginning Character Creation

Give out the character sheets (Appendix 1). The character sheets ask 4 questions that the players should now write an answer to - name, age, appearance and pronouns. They should be printed two-sided so players can make notes about the world and other characters on the back.

Spread out the reasons to live (Appendix 2) and the personality traits (Appendix 3) face up. First two players should each choose one reason to live, and tape or tack it onto their sheet in the appropriate place. The other two should then choose personality traits. When they choose personality traits they should choose one that represents something positive to them, one that represents something negative to them and the third can be either. Then the two pairs switch places, with the first pair now choosing personality traits, and then the other pair choosing reasons to live. They then return to their chairs.

Creating a shared world

The players should all contribute something about the regime they are opposing. The facilitator should encourage this not to be personal (that will come out in the game) but instead focus on the generalities. When did the regime take over? Do people remember what it was like before? How did they come into power? What do they stand for? What has happened to people who have opposed them?

Creating the resistance

The 4 of you came together with a purpose but became something more. You feel like a family now, held together as much by love as by the fight. Go round the circle and each player should introduce their name, age, appearance, pronouns and reason to live. (They should not describe their personality traits or the questions under their reason to live card. These will come out during play.) After each player does this the other players should take it in turns narrating briefly in 3 or 4 lines a memory their character that makes them feel that they and the original character are bound together. The memory could be pre or post resistance. They don't know the other person's traits but they can use theirs. For example:

'He was whispering to me that he was angry but afraid. He was shaking with it. I tried to be comforting but we were all scared. There was a loud noise in front of us

and he pushed me away and jumped in front of me without even thinking about it.'

or less dramatically

'We were running through the rain and laughing because we'd got away with it. And I turned and glanced at her. And her eyes and expression mirrored mine, joy that for a few hours people would remember one more of the 'disappeared'; regret that they would forget, that the memory was too dangerous to hold onto.'

This can be negotiated with the other player, if someone narrates something that goes against their personality traits or doesn't feel right to them then they can suggest an alternate way it could've gone.

After each person has read out their character sheet and had three people give short memories, and given three short memories in turn they should fill out the section 'what bonds you to the other members of the resistance?' and share it with the group.

Soundtrack / time warnings

If you are using the app on a phone please keep the screen on. Tell the players that the following events will be happening at the specified times as the game progresses:

Time	Using the app	Without the app
60 minutes	Clock chime	Say 'You have one hour.'
45 minutes to go	2 clock chimes	Warn the characters that they have 45 minutes left.
30 minutes to go	3 clock chimes	Warn the characters that they have 30 minutes left.
15 minutes to go	4 clock chimes	Warn the characters that they have 15 minutes left.
5 minutes to go	Gong chime	Warn the characters they have 5 minutes to go.
1 minute to go	Song starts and	Warn the characters they

	continues playing	have 1 minute to go. If you have a suitable song you could play it. Otherwise a warning will suffice.
Time's up	There will be a loud clock chime and the song will continue playing. Enter the prison as the guard (see 'the end')	Enter the prison as the guard (see 'the end') If you have a song playing it can continue to play.

Do not inform the players that the facilitator will also be able to make the app play 1 or 4 gunshot sounds and the music will continue until it does. After the gunshots have been played the music will fade over 10 seconds. See 'the end' for more details.

The last choice

You didn't expect it to come to this, not really, so you didn't think about it. Or maybe you couldn't think about it. Or maybe you thought of it constantly but you assumed it would be quick and brutal. You never thought you would have to decide. Not between you and them.

The 'reason to die' cards (appendix 4) should be cut out and lying face-down on the table, floor or whatever surface you choose. Players go up one at a time, turn over and look at the cards, choose the card that they feel would be appropriate for their character and attach it to the character sheet, and turn the others back to face-down. They should not talk about the card they have chosen and it's attendant questions out of character.

Just before the players go into the cell and the game begins, remind them that anything they weren't supposed to discuss during character creation can and should be brought out in play. Things that they discussed during character creation should also be brought out during play when appropriate. Remind them for the last time that they are free to leave if they are overwhelmed, and it won't spoil the game for anyone else.

4) The Game

The beginning

You are now the guard. Usher your 4 prisoners into the makeshift prison and ensure that they enter. If you get any resistance threaten a character, preferably not the one who's resisting.

Once they are in the prison read the following speech.

You have been caught committing acts of terrorism against our nation. The crime of terrorism carries a penalty of swift execution by firing squad. However, in a show of mercy the leader has decreed that if, at dawn, the instigator of your group confesses and reads a statement taking full responsibility for the actions that have taken place tonight then the rest of you will be spared and will be free to go from here. They alone will be executed. However, if more than one of you confess, or if no one confesses at dawn you will all be executed as the law dictates. The instigator has one hour to make peace with their conscience and ensure that the others accept their role.'

Reassure the prisoners that no one has bugged their cell and they are free to talk. Make sure they are convinced or it could restrict what they say.

Then start the app (if you are using it) so that a clock chimes, leave, and sit a bit away from the prisoners.

The middle

If you are using the app you won't really have much to do during this point except watch and make sure no one seems to be in any physical or emotional harm. Also check that no one is plotting to escape. Don't police them too tightly and only intervene if absolutely necessary. If you aren't using the app you will have to give manual countdown warnings using your watch or a clock. (see soundtrack / time warnings for when warnings should be given)

The end

The last chime has sounded or you have told them their time is up. There are two ways this could play out and the outcome will depend on whether one person confesses. If you are using the app music will be playing at this time; let it continue

to play.

Your first act will be to go in as the guard. 'Is the instigator of the act of terrorism ready to confess?'

Scenario 1 – one person confesses

Pull the person (gently) who confessed towards the door or beckon them towards you.

Say something like:

'Very well. Read the following speech - look into the camera as you do.'

Give them the confession (appendix 5). After they have read the confession blindfold them (unless they said they didn't want to be blindfolded in the warm up exercise, in which case tell them to shut their eyes) and lead them away. Around the area that you set up the prison find a tree, wall or suitable object to lean them against. Make sure that they are in view of the other prisoners.

Narrate their shooting loudly enough for the other prisoners to hear. Ask them whether they said anything in their last moments (a lover's name, a curse against the government, a regret, a goodbye) or whether they stood in silence. Narrate preparing to shoot. (If you have the app play the gunshot on your app. A gunshot will sound and the music will fade out over 10 seconds.) Narrate confirming their death.

Scenario 2 – No-one confesses or more than one person confesses

If this occurs tell them the leader dictates that this will mean they all have to die. If a second person raised their hand after a first, you can talk about how they have condemned the rest of their group who could have gone on to live happy lives. If any character in the group is younger than the others play on this.

Then blindfold them and walk them to somewhere near the prison. (If anyone said that they couldn't be blindfolded in the warm up exercise, go to them last. Tell them you've run out of blindfolds and they'll have to shut their eyes.) Narrate their shooting. Watch whether they join hands, whether they say goodbye or whether they stood in silence. Ask them if they're ready. (*If you have the app play the 4 gunshots. They will sound and the music will fade out over 10 seconds.*) Narrate confirming their deaths.

5) Debrief

As the game finishes

Help the character or characters who were executed to their feet if they fell and quietly check that they're OK. Bring them back to the others if they're not together. Quietly tell everyone that the game is over and that they should just take a minute, in silence, to let go of their characters and come back to themselves. Also take the time yourself to let go of the guard persona if necessary. After a minute, check in with everyone to see if there's anything that they need or if they're ready to start the debrief.

Group Discussion

In a group (it doesn't have to be in order but everyone should have a turn to speak) give people some time to talk generally about their thoughts about the game and how they are feeling now.

Once everyone has had a chance to do this ask some questions about moments that stood out. Ask players what the most emotional moment was for their character and if any specific moment would stay with them. Ask if there is anything they did in the game that they feel they want to apologise for. Ask them if there was anything that they found particularly difficult. Continue the discussion until everyone seems to have expressed all their feelings and are calm and present.

Discussion of character sheets

If this hasn't happened naturally it can be useful and interesting to discuss what questions people had, what reasons to die they had, what their personality traits were and how they brought them out. Keep the discussion going for as long as people seem to need it.

Confession is not betrayal. What you say or do doesn't matter: only feelings matter. If they could make me stop loving you—that would be the real betrayal." She thought it over. "They can't do that," she said finally. "It's the one thing they can't do. They can't make you believe it. They can't get inside you.""No," he said a little more hopefully, "no; that's quite true. They can't get inside you. If you can feel that staying human is worthwhile, even when it can't have any result whatever, you've beaten them."

George Orwell - Nineteen Eighty-Four

Appendix 1 Character Sheet

Character sheet - Here Comes a Candle

My name isMy ag	je is
Pronouns used	
My appearance	
is	
What bonds you to the other members of the	he resistance?

Three character traits:

Notes about other players / the world.

Appendix 2 Reasons to Live

Reasons to Live

I saw what they did to my partner. I saw them die. But my two daughters are at home. They are with my sister but she doesn't really care about them. They need a parent. Emily's 5 and Sarah's 7. I can't imagine them growing up without me. Is that selfish? If they grow up knowing the party killed both their parents who will they grow up hating. Us or them? I don't want them to grow up hating anyone.

Questions

- Why were you continuously risking your life when your children were depending on you?
- Why was the children's other parent killed?

Reasons to live

All my life I have felt a power, kind and gentle but beyond my comprehension. I always felt it there with me. It was gentle and kind and it gave me strength when I was afraid. It always told me, during missions that it wasn't my time to die and when it was it would be in glory. This isn't glory and God was still saying it isn't time. I still have work to do.

Questions

- Where is God now? Ever since I've been in this prison I can't feel His presence anymore.
- Would God want me to allow another to die when I can prevent it?
- How sure am I that standing back and watching someone lie to save us all is the right thing?

Reasons to Live

I know what I can do. People listen when I speak and read what I write. I have made people think. I have changed hearts and minds and I know this. I am the only one of the group who knows this for sure. I would die for the truth if necessary, but maybe the truth is better served by me living and devoting my whole life to it.

Questions

- Is the cause more important than my love for my friends?
- Anyone can write the truth. I can't know people won't listen to anyone else. What I have been saying will be just as true coming from anyone else. How do I know that my role in the group actually has to be done by me?

Reasons to Live

One day this nightmare will be over. The future that I've been fighting for will arrive. I will settle down and the past will have been like a bad dream. That was always the plan. But the running, the near misses and now this. Is it selfish or just honest to say that I believe that I have suffered enough?

Questions

- However hard I try to leave the group and stop fighting it keeps pulling me back. Why?
- Can I allow others to suffer as I have done?

Reasons to Live

When I felt it, him — I always knew it was a him, first stir inside me, when I knew for certain, I hated him. I have no idea who his father is. I did what I had to do to get by and to be able to eat that night and I got more money if I did it unsafely. I took herbs of course but we knew, we always knew there was a risk. I can't support myself let alone a child. And yet, being here - knowing my death will also kill him feels wrong. I could leave him on the doorstep of a wealthy couple, or at least in an orphanage. I could give him a chance. Or we could both die. I don't care about him more than saving the rest of the resistance.

Questions

- You suspect that the father of your child might not be one of your 'clients' but actually someone you care about. Why?
- Is a potential life you don't love more important than the life of people you do love and who have become family to you?

Reasons to Live

I am the best placed person to recruit young adults into our group and disseminate our texts. They look up to me and I can make them question things and find the right people. There are always those who want to join us, it's just a matter of seeing the signs. The bigger the group, the more damage it can do to the party.

Questions

- I am recruiting young people who maybe don't fully understand and taking their lives from them to give to the resistance group. When I tell them it's risky their eyes light up. They want to be heros. Am I doing the right thing?
- Am I just using these people who are practically children as an excuse to save myself?

Reasons to live

To die, knowing I've changed nothing? I can't bear it. I will die a meaningless death. There will be memorials maybe but people won't care. Not about me. I seem the terrorist type. If I lived I would fight to my last breath and give everything I could to the cause. If I die now I am a statistic, a foot note. I joined this group 9 weeks ago. If I had a year I could make a difference — I could topple this regime.

Questions

- Am I lying to myself, am I just scared?
- Do I know what I'm capable of really? Do I know what the others are capable of?

Reasons to Live

I was never brave. I was never like the others. I joined the group because someone asked me to. Because I wanted to be on the right side of history. I didn't think we were doing any harm. The odd train derailment, publications written. I agreed with every word. But I want to live. I have no skill or talent. There is nothing that I could offer the group that they don't already have. But I am scared of a dark nothingness. I am scared of waiting for the bullet. I am scared of fading away. I can't die. I have to live. I am so so afraid.

Questions

- You love the others in your group. How much? Enough to face your fear for them?
- How much do you care about the cause?
- Will your fear cause you to hurt and betray others or can you fight that instinct? Is it hard to fight?

Appendix 3 Personality Traits

Martyr complex	Ignorant	Strong for others
Over protective	Perceptive	Anxious
Spirited	Lost and hurt	Traumatised
Empowered	Kind	Faithful
Won't accept bad situations	Depressed	Addict
Kind	Needs human contact	Angry
Contemplative	Courageous	Cowardly
Creative	Earnest	Dramatic
Immature	Rational	Realistic
Unrealistic	Intense	Conservative
Sarcastic	Skeptical	Stubborn

Strict	Dishonest	Indecisive
Regretful	Unkind	Weak-willed
Modest	Competitive	Aggressive
Loving	Honest	Strong for themselves

Appendix 4 Reasons to Die

Reasons to die

The group were caught because I couldn't run fast enough. I wasn't fully trained. Maybe that's an excuse. It sounds like an excuse doesn't it? When I felt the armed police getting closer I panicked and shouted for help. I alerted the police that I wasn't alone. If I hadn't panicked they would've thought that I was alone and shot me and we wouldn't be in this mess. My friends came back to help me. They shouldn't have.

Questions

- I hadn't been fully trained. I think that's why I was caught? Why was I on the mission? Did I insist I went? Or did they insist I came?
- Did I feel coerced to join the group?

Reasons to die

I felt that I couldn't stand against the government alone. In order to be effective I had to recruit others. I recruited the first 2 members of the group and formed us into an organisation. I started the group because I wanted to matter. But I was a graffiti artist. I wanted to fight them. I wanted to fight them with pictures and words. And I don't want the people who are here because of me to die.

Questions

- Was I careful to approach only people who were already acting against the party on their own? Or did I cause them to join the fight?
- Can the group continue to be effective without me?

Reasons to die

I was alone. They had taken everything. Within the group I found a family. I can't go on without the only people who have ever cared about me. If any of them confess and die I will have lost a member of my family. How can we go on after this? How can I go on after this?

Questions

- Is this selfish to care about myself more than the cause?
- I have unique skills that I bring to the group. What are they? Can the group continue without them?

Reasons to die

I am secretly in love with (one of) the people who are most vocal about volunteering to die. I can't live without them. I won't live without them. Without them there is no reason to fight, no person to keep the world safe for. I must die in their place.

Questions

- Is love, even a love as strong as mine really more important than the people dying under this regime?
- Why can't I accept that the person I love is an adult who can make their own decisions? What do I need to do to overcome that? Should I overcome that?

Reasons to die

If I choose to live will I ever truly be free, really? The others are talking about continuing the fight if we live. Do they really believe that we won't be watched? If they follow us I will inevitably eventually lead them to my same sex lover, even if I try to stay away my lover will look for me, and they will execute us both for perversion of the natural order.

Questions

- OK, they didn't sign up for this. But so many innocent have died. If I am useful enough to the cause to go on living, and if I am willing to lay down my own life how far am I willing to go? Is love really more important than the fight?
- Do I love him / her / them more than I love my friends?

Reasons to die

I am the sort of person the party supports. I sing acoustic and folk songs about the glory of life as it is now, maybe with some strongly veiled sarcasm. When I am singing I can forget about the words and focus on the music and feel truly free. I have built a large number of fans. I look young and innocent and I embody the regime's ideal. The others will make sure that I am remembered, that my name and face become a symbol. I will be their martyr.

Questions

- Am I happy being a martyr knowing that I will die and be remembered as the sex I was born as rather than the gender I am?
- Is my only role in the group to die to support the cause?

Reasons to die

There is something dark within me and it's getting darker. Melodramatic right? But I don't just want to go after empty buildings or to derail trains any more. The guards and the soldiers signed up to murder and obey their orders unthinkingly. Maybe we should show them the cost of that? I am so angry but I don't want to kill, I don't want to become like them. I just find it hard to fight the feeling that I should.

Questions

- I am the expert in explosives, I am unique in that I managed to learn from someone who passed their knowledge on to me. The group is unlikely to find another person with my skills. Does that justify my life?
- Can I keep this anger inside me at bay?
 Should I?

Reasons to die

The group listen when I talk. If I decide a mission is too dangerous it doesn't happen. If I decide it goes ahead then we plan it. I decide who our best fighters are and who we need. I decided who was on the mission that night. They were all there because of me. They are all here because of me.

Questions

- What will my death mean for the group?
- I knew the risks when I joined the group but now I'm afraid. Afraid of death but more afraid of living with someone else's death on my conscience. Is that a logical reason to die? For the sake of the cause should I live?

Appendix 5 Confession

I (full name) confess that I have committed acts of terrorism against the state and it's inhabitants. I incited a group of people to commit these acts with me. I am beyond rehabilitation. As I die I will reflect on the wrongs that I have committed against the party.

In my last moments I choose freely and voluntarily to ask for forgiveness for the terrorism that I have committed. May it be granted as the leader sees fit.

HERE. ME. NOW.

BY VENN WYLDE

here. me. now. is an empathy game with weighty subject-matter; despite its focus on traumatic experiences, playtesters call it "fun, not heavy." Players explore scenes through whole-body listening and appreciative movement to develop insight and connection with each other.

here. me. now.

A GAME OF EMPATHY

by Venn Wylde

2-4 players 60-90 min



here. me. now.

Quick start: do as described in first paragraph of Phase 0 on page 4, then go right into reading aloud in Phase 1.

WELCOME!



Have you ever relived a traumatic moment of your life? Have you ever thought your perspective had been ignored or overrun? Was there ever a time when you thought no-one understood or cared about you? Have you had one of those moments flash up around you so powerfully that you froze, lashed out, silenced yourself, or ran away? Have you wished that moment had gone differently, or wondered who you might be without that experience? This game's for you.



Here. Me. Now. is a freeform game that builds empathy between its players. One player tells a story of a challenging moment in their life, and the others listen with their whole bodies, using theatrical movement and interpretive dance to express the story and their emotional experience of it. At the end, storytellers have an opportunity to recast their story, and integrate and embody this new version. Content may be visionary, innocuous, and/or violent, and descriptions abstract and/or vivid. While it can be played with lighter topics, it is designed for use with challenging material, and with a high degree of attention to allowing the players to choose their level of engagement.

This game takes 60 to 90 minutes, including warmups. Some groups choose to repeat with a new storyteller, adding ten to twenty minutes to their playtime with each iteration.

WHY WE PLAY



We play this game to connect with each other. We play to make new discoveries about ourselves and each other, and to celebrate them. We play to build empathy for each of our unique experiences of challenges in life, and to heal any of those experiences that may be lingering. We are here to witness each other, and be witnessed, as we generate new friendly stories about our own unkenning (however minor or extreme that may have been) and thereby integrate, reframe, and transform those experiences and ourselves.

GAMEPLAY SYNOPSIS

After establishing safety mechanics and warming up, we will define some boundaries on our stories and select a storyteller. That player will then tell a story of a challenging moment in their life. Other players physically (and quietly) act out the story through theatrical movement, interpretive dance, etc. Responding to the story through movement, self-touch, and attention to feelings and physical sensations, players and storyteller create a mutual flow of empathy. At their option, the storyteller might ask one player to support them in generating creative flow by taking on the role of Flow Coach. After the story, the players debrief by sharing what they discovered through play, appreciating each other's contributions to their experience, and naming some of the new choices they might make on the basis of what they've learned. Then, the storyteller may choose to tell an alternate history of that same scene or set of scenes — showing what it might have been like if it had gone as they had wished. Players then debrief again and conclude.

This game is designed to be co-facilitated by the players, though it can also be augmented by a skilled facilitator who is familiar with the processes. Expect to take about an hour to 90 minutes. If you've already done the warmups, established safety mechanisms, and selected a storyteller, you may be able to play through in half an hour.

GAMEPLAY PHASES

PHASE 0: PREP & SETUP — directions for pre-game set-up

PHASE 1: WELCOMING & INTRODUCTION — establishing the purpose

PHASE 2: SAFETY & WARMUPS — context-setting activities

The door is closed • The door is open • Move as you are moved • Touch • Creative Joint Play • Art Appreciation • Commitments

PHASE 3: CHOOSING ROLES — roles, choosing, and boundaries

Review the roles • Palette {mini-game} • Appreciative choosing {mini-game}

PHASE 4: STORYTELLING & DEBRIEF — the heart of the game

PHASE 5: RE-TELLING & DEBRIEF {optional} — "do-overs"

PHASE 6: CONCLUSION AND GAME FEEDBACK — wrap

PLAY!

PHASE O

Gather supplies: scrap paper & colored pens for **Art Appreciation**, note cards for **Appreciative Choosing**, and big paper & markers for **Palette** and **Debrief**. Write the debriefing sentence stems (pg 9), large enough for everyone to read, on a wall chart, and post another wall chart with "OK" and "no" on it for **Palette**. Make copies of the **Commitments** and **Roles** pages (pp 13-14) for each player.

If you are hosting, read at least the **Welcome** (pg 2), the **Roles** (pg 14), and **Gameplay Synopsis** (pg 3).

Though the game is written for co-facilitation by the players, it is possible for one player to take on additional responsibilities as a facilitator. If you are doing that, familiarize yourself with the **Appreciative Choosing** exercise (pg 16) and the **Debrief** process (pg 9).

If you are trying to become deeply familiar with the game, or evaluate it in some way, it may help you to read through as if you were following the sequence described in the **Game Phases** section. On the other hand, insight follows experience. Or, as playtesters said, "the point is discovered in the playing of it." You will get a deeper understanding of the game if you can find a friend with whom to play through it together. It can be quite powerful with two players, and playtesters say it has high replay value.

PHASE 1 GATHERING & INTRODUCTION

To begin play, read the following text aloud:

This is a game that can be played by reading through the game text together and following instructions as they arise. To make things clearer, instructions that are italicized are meant for the reader to do without reading them aloud. *For example, show this text to the other players and point to it.* We will now take turns reading aloud from **Welcome** and **Why We Play (pg 2)**. This symbol () will indicate to pass the instructions.

When you've done reading those sections aloud, proceed to **Phase 2**. As before, pass the game text to the next reader each time you encounter the symbol.

Continue to take turns reading aloud, and follow the instructions.

PHASE 2 SAFETY & WARM-UPS



THE DOOR IS CLOSED {no more players}

Remember: Read aloud (non-italics). *Do the things (italics)*.

These are all the players for this session. No additional players may join us at this point.



THE DOOR IS OPEN {you are free to go}

You don't have to be here. Take care of yourself. The door is open for each of us to leave as soon as we are ready; we need no excuse or explanation.



MOVE AS YOU ARE MOVED {make your own choices}

During play, you'll be asked to move. Allow that movement to come from within you. You are not required to do any particular thing that someone says, even if you have chosen to play out a role that the storyteller describes as doing that thing.



TOUCH {not between players}

This game sets touch-between-players outside the scope of play, and uses self-touch to draw awareness to places in ourselves where we may be doing what we notice others doing. This is intentional, in light of the sensitive nature of some of the stories that we may share, and all of our unique relationships with touch and with each other. Individual players and playgroups may of course make their own agreements about touch with each other; please do so with care.



CREATIVE JOINT PLAY {an experience of **FLOW**}

In this game, we will all be asked to make new movements with our bodies, and our storyteller will be telling a potentially challenging story. This warmup will help us with all of that by giving us an experience of flowing positive feeling that supports creativity.

This exercise will call for even more creativity from those of us with limited mobility. If the game text calls for you to move in a way that doesn't fit your body, imagine it's asking for another movement that does.

Start wiggling your toes. *Do this yourself, and watch for others to do likewise.* Wait for them to wiggle enough that their feet are moving. Notice that your feet are moving now too. Allow that, play with moving your feet and your

PHASE 2 SAFETY & WARM-UPS (CONTINUED)

toes. Notice how your feet are connected to your ankles, and you're moving those too now.

Wait for each set of movements to move the next joint before proceeding.

Notice how moving your ankles gets your knees involved. Embrace and expand on that.

Wait for it...Notice how that's got your hips into the game. Wiggle your hips, too, as you continue moving your toes, ankles, and knees in new ways.

Let the wiggling continue. Notice how that gets your vertebrae moving in new relationships with each other, and bring your whole spine into your constantly shifting wiggle. The idea here is to create new relationships between the bones of us, opening new space for possibilities within us. You're still wiggling, right? As you move your spine, you'll notice that your ribcage is moving too. Accept that. Make it bigger. Move your scapulae too, and notice how that gets your arms moving. Move your arms! And now your elbows. Let your wrists play back and forth with your ankles. Let the movement of your spine play all the way up into your head, and (let your larynx move around in different ways; this may make your voice sound funny — that's good, go with it) allow your jaw and larynx to move as you continue wiggling your whole body. If you start to notice that you're doing something familiar, change it up — going slow? try fast; switch straight-line movements for curves, light movements for strong ones, controlled movement for looser movement. Demonstrate by doing!

At some point, when you're feeling good and you can see that others are into the movement, let it continue ... then settle into subtle movement and say: This feeling (describe the feeling in your body — many people experience warmth, expansion, space, and movement) is what this game refers to as "flow." It coincides with a mental state that supports creativity and discovery.

(There's more information about these warmups in notes at the end of the game text.)

PHASE 2 SAFETY & WARM-UPS (CONTINUED)



ART APPRECIATION {generating mutual positive regard}

Our next warmup is about creating a context of appreciation. Two key definitions of appreciation for this game are "sensitive awareness" and "focusing primarily on positive aspects." We'll explore that now by appreciating each other. First, please get a piece of paper and the colored pen of your choice; let me know you've got that by resting into silence. Wait. Now, please find a partner, and face each other. Wait. The person in front of you has spent their entire life creating themselves exactly as they are now. They are an exquisite creative expression, a work of art. Use the next five minutes to notice and **silently** appreciate them — the details of them and the whole of them — and capture what you notice on your paper to share with them. Feel free to use what you notice to make up stories about who they are; we all do that all the time anyway, and this is a great opportunity to do that in an appreciative way. Afterward, you'll have a minute to share your appreciations with your partner; meanwhile, drop the words out of your interaction.

Set a five-minute timer for the noticing phase; when it goes off, say "Okay, now please shift into expressing your appreciations to each other," and then set a one-minute timer for the expressing phase. When the one-minute timer goes off, say, "That's one minute. Please wrap it up and come back to the group."



COMMITMENTS {declaring how we will behave during this game}

Most games have some structure that tells us how to play. In support of our creating safety for ourselves together, this game asks us to affirmatively declare how we intend to behave.

Walk around the space saying aloud the commitments on your Commitments sheet (pg 13). As you do, play with moving faster and slower through the space; use creative joint play to generate flow. Notice how you feel as you speak these commitments aloud. Try them on. You might speak over each other; that's okay. After three minutes, or as the room becomes quiet, make a choice — embrace these commitments, at least for the duration of play, or go find something else to do that isn't this game. Set a three-minute timer, and start doing this exercise.

PHASE 3 CHOOSING ROLES



REVIEW THE ROLES

The **Roles** form the core mechanics of the game. It's particularly important to understand the roles before doing the following two exercises, Palette and Appreciative Choosing.

Everyone get out your **Roles** sheet (pg 14). We'll take turns reading them aloud, and answer any questions about them before we move on. In particular, pay attention to the prompts given to the storyteller.

Have one player read each role aloud. Check that everyone understands the roles, how they work, and how they interact. Continue below.



PALETTE

Keeping in mind the prompts given to the storyteller and the purpose of our play together, it's important that we get clear as to which themes or topics we want to put out of bounds, if any. The Palette mechanism will help us do that. It is described on page 15; we will play it now.

Play the Palette game, and then continue below.



APPRECIATIVE CHOOSING

Now it is time for us to select our storyteller, but we want to do that carefully. We want each player's voice to carry equal weight, so that we gain the benefit of all our perspectives. And we want to do this in a way that brings us together, building on our growing sense of mutual appreciation. The **Appreciative Choosing** game (pp 16-17) is designed for exactly this purpose.

Go play it now, and then continue with **Phase 4**.

PHASE 4 STORYTELLING & DEBRIEF



STORYTELLING

This is the heart of the game, and we will create it together. Here our storyteller will tell us their story. Here we will witness them, expressing the story and our feelings through movement that's friendly to our bodies. [Storyteller], please let us know when to begin. I'll set a five minute timer for your story. It's extremely rare for a story to go that long. When the storyteller starts telling their story, start a five-minute timer.



DEBRIEF

Remember: Read aloud (non-italics). Do the things (italics).

We debrief now to share what we've discovered, how we're feeling now, any "aha!" moments of discovery, and appreciation for each other's contributions to our experience. We might also be making new choices, to try out things we haven't before; we will share those too. If these concepts don't capture something you're burning to share, say that thing instead. Let's go around, with each of us adding one thing at a time. These sentence stems are here as prompts. If the sentence stems remain unclear, read aloud these questions:

	What sensations do you notice in your body? ("I feel in my")
•	Did you have any "Aha!" moments? Discoveries. Realizations? ("I discovered")
	Did someone contribute significantly to your experience? How? ("I appreciate for")
	Do you plan to try something new or different from before?
	("I will")

When the debrief feels complete, or after you've gone around four times, read the following: That concludes our debrief. Now, the storyteller has an option.



The mind doesn't know the difference between memory and imagination, and traumatic experiences are troublesome precisely because they remain as unintegrated parts of ourselves that repeat verbatim. As a result, new stories and perspectives that we supply for ourselves can often be supportive for healing. They do not erase these experiences, but can ease our

relationships with them. Now, the storyteller may create an alternate history for the players to act out, retelling the story as they might sometimes wish it had been; if they do, we will then debrief again.



[Storyteller], do you want to retell that story, with key people making different choices than they did in the memory you told us about just now? This is an opportunity to fit the details together differently, or to craft entirely new details and say how you wish that moment had gone. This won't erase your experience, but it may give you additional choices in how you relate with your history—and it may help the rest of us learn more too.

If the storyteller says no to a retelling: proceed to Phase 6

PHASE 5 RETELLING & DEBRIFF (OPTIONAL)



If the storyteller says yes:

Great! If you like, in this retelling, you may play as yourself among the players while you are narrating the story; otherwise, narrate without acting out the story. Either way, choose a new place in the room from which to start, and move your body in a new way. Also, please let us know when to begin.

Set a five-minute timer.

When the storyteller is complete, debrief a second time, as before.

PHASE 6 CONCLUSION & GAME FEEDBACK

Thanks everyone — that's the end of the game.

Note that some groups choose to play again at this point with a new storyteller, bypassing the warmups and adding 10-20 minutes of additional playtime. Please check for affirmative and enthusiastic consent from your fellow players.

If it feels right, please invite players to send feedback to the designer: venn@specialsnowflakegames.com. If you're running a playtest, this would be the time to transition into your meta-game debrief; some suggested questions are included on page 21.

VARIANTS

CHANGING THE PROMPT

While this game was written and designed to draw out a particular kind of story, it's possible to change the experience of the game significantly by changing the prompts given to the storyteller. For example, if the prompt is changed to "tell a story of a time when someone ignored or took advantage of those who could not advocate for themselves," players might explore stories about the natural world. This is not my preference as a designer, however, as it also makes space for people to project whatever stories they wish on other beings (and in the process possibly ignore real signals from those others) rather than acknowledging, owning, and expressing their own biases and perspectives. It is essential to this game that the stories be told from the narrator's perspective, and to acknowledge that whatever perspective the storyteller is sharing is in some way their own.

That said, the **Palette** mechanism can be expanded by adding a "yes" column or list for themes that players specifically hope for. As with the "OK" list, items on the "yes" list may be moved to the "no" list by any player after they're clarified.

CHANGING THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

The game experience is very different with larger groups, not only because some of the mechanics take longer, but also because people tend to limit what stories they'll share—how intimate and personal those stories are—based on the strength of their existing relationships with the other players. Repeated play can help with this, as can playing in smaller groups. With larger groups of players, you may get more out of splitting into twos, threes, and fours, and sharing out any particularly salient discoveries from the debriefings.

CHANGING OTHER THINGS

The **Appreciative Choosing** minigame can be easily extended to facilitate other choices. Most directly and easily, it can be used to select people for roles—that's the context from which the process was taken. It can equally be used to select among any array of options, provided that the group doing the selecting has a clear goal that they want their selection to help them accomplish. For example, it can be used to redesign a game (choos-

ing among mechanics, with fun or positive playtest feedback as a goal), to distribute proceeds from an event (choosing among profit-sharing schema, with a goal of rewarding those who made it successful and motivating future such contributions), or to adopt a governance model (choosing among models, with whatever goals your organization has). Your game designer has used it for all of those, with groups from two to 40.

CHANGING THE GAME

This is the game-improvement metagame. Write up your play experience. Suggest changes, including how others would know your changes had achieved your intentions. Post them, link back to where you found this game, and send them as feedback. Submit changes on github once the game is posted there. Make this game amazing-er. Let your perspective be known. Help us all know each other better.

COMMITMENTS

Try saying these aloud as you walk around the space. Notice how you feel.

I commit to taking responsibility for myself and for being with how I feel about what's going on.

How you'd know: check if you're aware of any of the many thousands of things happening in your body at any given moment, and whether you feel happy with yourself as the source of those feelings; if you're blaming someone or something for how you feel, including blaming yourself, you've missed the boat. Just notice that you're off the boat, and get back on. Or decide you're going to swim around in blame and criticism for some period of time, declare your choice, and notice the results.

I commit to expressing how I feel and what I notice, free of blame, criticism, argument, and defensiveness.

How you'd know: check if you're feeling happy and connected; if you find you're in an argument, blaming or criticising someone, or getting defensive, take responsibility for that — eg, "I notice that I'm arguing; I feel scared I'll be misunderstood, and I'd like to try again;" see if you can express yourself so clearly no-one argues. Or claim your choice aloud, eg, "I'm speaking arguably" or "I'm speaking to produce defensiveness," and see what happens next.

I commit to listening for underlying feelings, desires, and intentions.

How you'd know: say aloud what you think you're hearing them say about how they feel and what they want; if they nod and smile, you've got it — otherwise, ask them what you missed and try again. Or declare your intention to put on a Bad Listening Theater show; give your production a title, and invite whoever wants to participate to come join in. See what happens.

I commit to giving sensitive awareness to what I notice, and to focusing primarily on those aspects I want more of.

How you'd know: check to see if you can describe in detail what's happening in and around you, and whether more of the things you want are showing up in your awareness; if you're having a hard time with the details, or you're getting more of what you don't want, try saying clearly what you *do* want. Or declare a wallow-and-complain session.

I commit to making only agreements I intend to keep, and to changing them if or when they no longer work for me.

How you'd know: you feel happy about making, keeping, and changing agreements. If not, simply acknowledge how you feel about it, say what you'll do now, and ask whoever you made the agreement with to do the same. If you broke an agreement, acknowledge that to the people you made the agreement with and take responsibility for cleaning up whatever mess might have resulted from your choices.

If you embrace these commitments for yourself, you might enjoy the results of signing a printed copy of this page and keeping it for your own reference. Go ahead and sign it now, if you like.

ROLES

These roles are the backbone of the game. Everything else is set up to make these roles work better and to get more out of playing them. The storyteller is at the heart, and the flow coach (if you have one) is there to support the storyteller.

STORYTELLER

You will tell a story of your choice about a time when you believe your voice or perspective was unheard, overlooked, overrun, or otherwise ignored. Alternate prompts: any story you frequently or consistently recite to yourself with the same details; any story from your life that you wish had gone differently; any story from your life that has become a troubling and familiar pattern.

- 1. Pick a Flow Coach, if you like, from among the other participants.
- 2. Choose a place in the play area to stand, sit, or lie.
- 3. In that place, tell your story.
 - If you get stuck, change position: stand up, sit, or lie down.
 - If you chose a coach, try on what you notice them doing.
 - Notice how other players' movement expressions match your story.
 - Advanced play: If you notice stillness in another player's body, gently touch that place on your own body and bring your attention to how you might be doing something similar there; play with generating a new movement from that place.
- 4. When your turn ends, step out of the place where you told your story. Gather the players in a new place in the room for the debrief (pg 9).



FLOW COACH

You have been selected by the storyteller to help them generate flow while telling their story.

- Observe the storyteller. Position yourself so that they may observe you if they choose.
- Keep your own body moving, in friendly ways.
- Notice where & how the storyteller moves; try out those movements, and play with them.
- If you notice a place they're not moving, lightly touch that place on your own body, bring your awareness to that place, allow it to be still, and then generate movement from that place that feels good to you there.



THE PLAYERS

You will witness and play out the storyteller's story, using your own creative movements to express what you notice.

- Attend to the story, and play it out.
- Move through the space in whatever friendly ways occur to you to express the story.
- Do this free of vocalization, and free from any touching of the other players.
- Notice what's happening in your body as you play out this story. Can you bring that into your movement expression?
- Notice what the other players and the storyteller are doing with their bodies to express the story. Play with those movements, too, as a way of adding to your own expression. [14]

PALETTE {MINI-GAME}

This is a minigame for describing what themes the players are willing to explore during this playsession. These will inform the player in the Storyteller role when they select what story to tell. Make two lists, labeled "OK" and "no," where all the players can see them. A large piece of paper on a wall works well.

The "OK" list is for things that a player thinks the other players <u>might not expect</u> from the stories shared in this game, which they want to be sure is <u>okay to include</u> among the subjects and themes of the stories that are shared in this play-session. Some of the "OK" lists from playtesting included, for example, "good intentions with poor results," "endearing friendship stories," and "events from youth/childhood."

The "no" list is for themes, subjects, etc, that a player thinks <u>might be expected</u> to show up among the stories that are told in this game, given the focus of the storyteller's prompt, which they <u>do not want to encounter</u> during this play-session. Some items from the "no" lists generated for playtesting included "domestic abuse," "nihilism," and "sexual violence."

If a player adds something to the "OK" list, the players may ask for clarification and, once all the players are satisfied that they understand the topic, any player may choose to place this topic on the "no" list. A player may add anything to the "no" list, and though other players may ask for clarification they may not remove the concept. It can be helpful for players clarifying items on the "no" list to have whoever added the "no" item add items to the "OK" list that are on the acceptable side of that theme for them.

Importantly, while players **may** choose to tell each other about what leads them to add something to one of the lists, and we might learn about each other in that way, "I choose because I choose" is all the explanation required for adding something to the list of your choice. For example, our playtester adding "domestic abuse" to the "no" list had been playtesting an intense game about domestic violence the previous evening, but we didn't need to know that for it to be okay to rule those topics out for the session. No explanation is required.

We will go around by turns, with each player adding one thing to the list of their choice on each of their turns. A player may pass; if they do, this is the last round of additions.

APPRECIATIVE CHOOSING {MINI-GAME}

This minigame will ensure that all of our voices are valued equally as we choose who will be our storyteller. If you object to facilitating, you may hand this to someone else.

If one player has prepped as your facilitator for this session, hand this to them.

Read aloud the bold items, and do the italicized ones.

I will be our facilitator for this section.

- 1. Check that the players understand the Storyteller role. Have the players form a circle.
- 2. Each player write their name on a scrap of paper, and underline it. Include yourself.
- 3. Each player write on their scrap of paper the name of the player they'd like to be the storyteller. Circle it. Do likewise.
- **4. Hand your cards to the facilitator.** (Here, you're gathering creative input free of the groupthink tendency to clump up around the first suggestion anyone offers.)
- 5. Facilitator, randomize the order of the cards, then, for each card, ask: "[underlined name], why did you nominate [circled name]?" or "[underlined name], what is it about having [circled name] as our storyteller that you think will make this a better game for all of us?" Continue to include yourself each time you go around. (We get to learn here about each player's values and intentions, and how we regard each other.) You may wish to track these nominations, and the reasons for them for example by taking notes on the backs of the cards and placing them in stacks for each nominated player.
- 6. Facilitator, choose one player across the circle from you. Starting with them, and going around the circle, ask each player: "You nominated [name]; do you want to change your nomination? Why or why not?" This gives the group an opportunity to align with each other's reasoning. Continue tracking these changes. Include yourself.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

This is a variant of a process developed by the game designer, Genius Engine, and The Sociocracy Group, published under a creative commons attribution-sharealike license 3.0.

APPRECIATIVE CHOOSING CONTINUED...

- 7. Facilitator, choose one player to suggest as the storyteller. Name that person aloud: "I suggest that [name] be our storyteller," and ask a person beside them in the circle: "Do you know any reason why having [name] as our storyteller would get in the way of our purpose in playing this game together today?"
 - a. Continue around the circle <u>away</u> from the player you're suggesting, asking each player that same question. Ask the suggested player last. If they express any hesitation about sharing their story with the group, treat that as a possible objection; invite them to consider sharing their stories another time. The concern here is that pressuring someone into revealing their vulnerable stories goes directly against the intention of this game to support people in their autonomy.
 - b. Note if any player says "yes" you'll come back to hear from them about it later.
 - c. After going all the way around the circle, ask the players who had objections: "Can you describe your concern in terms of what we're here together for today?"
- 8. If there were concerns expressed in step 7, integrate them and repeat step 7 until you suggest a storyteller and get no objections. Then...
- 9. Congratulations! [Name] is our storyteller.

END NOTES

DESIGNER'S NOTES

My initial goal in developing this game was to use conscious touch and expressive movement to bring attention to (and evoke empathy for) the experiences of people and groups whose voices and perspectives have been unheard, overlooked, or otherwise ignored. Being aware that my own stories and beliefs about those experiences would necessarily permeate anything I might make on the subject, and wishing (as is my bias) to both celebrate and make space for others' unique discoveries and expression in this area, I chose to make a game that invites people to reflect on the ways in which they've experienced these things themselves. At first I thought of this as being primarily a variant on Playback Theater and Theater of the Oppressed — which it definitely still is — but it has become much more than that. It has become a way to share some of the methods I've used (and continue to use) to heal my own experiences of childhood sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. In that spirit I intend to make a space in which we can reframe, and make new stories about, our own traumatic experiences. My hope is that the stories people make together with this game will be ones that help us all along the healing journey by connecting us with each other and opening us to our creative power.

LUDOGRAPHY

This game started out as a simple variant of Playback Theater. I added simultaneous performance and-narration (both to speed things up and to create another layer of feedback between the teller and the players), the flow coach (to help the storyteller be present in the moment of sharing potentially challenging material), and an element of touch (as a support for both presence and empathy). Then I added warmups (to set a context of playful movement and appreciation), safety mechanisms (for, y'know, safety), Palette (because some playtesters were surprised about the tone of the game), and the storyteller-selection process (because it helps us get to know each other better, share the spotlight, and encounter and resolve important concerns together that we might not otherwise). It may have been a fellow Game Gardener who suggested that people tell their stories as they wish they'd happened. I saw an opportunity to borrow from Theater of the Oppressed — but instead of having just anyone meddle with the story, I would focus on empowering the storyteller. And that's when I recognized that I'd just recapitulated my own healing process: when I've told enough alternate versions of a story, I draw out new lessons and elevate

them, reclaiming my power and putting the details of the past at my service rather than holding them above me. Which story is "real" is arguable; what matters to me is that we create stories that serve our liberation.

This game, and my whole development process, was strongly influenced by the games, exercises, and other playful work of my friends, mentors, and colleagues Drs Kathlyn and Gay Hendricks (www.hendricks.com). Two of the warmups (creative joint play, art appreciation) are drawn directly from their work. And my language, in this game as elsewhere, is strongly influenced by the years I've spent collaborating with them and with our larger community of conscious leaders, somatic psychotherapists, coaches, mentors, and facilitators.

This game borrows its Palette mechanism—one of my favorite tone-setting tools—directly from Microscope (pg 13), published by Lame Mage Productions (www.lamemage.com).

The Appreciative Choosing minigame is a variant of a process drawn directly from Sociocracy (www.sociocracy.com).

OTHER NOTES

You can learn more about Creative Joint Play from this video made by Kathlyn Hendricks at http://www.hendricks.com/uncategorized/creative-joint-play-video/.

ABOUT THE DESIGNER

An imaginative, queer, and socially awkward Quaker farmkid from Vermont, Venn "grew up" to become a systems geek and a game designer. Along the way: improv theater nerd, community organizer, Reedie mathemetician, progressive political activist, Democratic Party Chair, chocolatier, business consultant, and angel investor.

THANKS

If my partner had not told me to go play games for a month, I might not have found Games to Gather, jumped into facilitating a game one night, and realized that I needed to turn my custom playset into a full-fledged game (still in progress; it got back-burner treatment when the Golden Cobra came to my attention). So thanks, Suz, for pushing me to pursue what gives me joy—and thanks to all the folks who joined in creating playful and welcoming space at Games to Gather, where I experienced such ease doing this thing I love.

Thanks again to the Games to Gather organizers, for pushing the Game Garden crew to participate in the 2015 Golden Cobra game design contest. I would not otherwise have known this beautiful thing existed, and probably wouldn't have made this particular game.

Thanks also to my fellow Game Gardeners, for designing, making, playtesting, and editing games together with me. It's been a fun ride this month, and I'm excited to think we'll keep on making games together.

Thanks again to Suz, for laying out and creating the visual design of this game and for providing your genius editorial insight. I consider myself fortunate that we play so well together in this way, crafting text that communicates effectively.

And of course, thanks to Nate, Henry, Charlie, and Gid. You motivate and inspire me.

PLAYTESTING & FEEDBACK

Josi-Lyn Dulaney • Halley Farwood • Jason Giardino • Susan Gillespie • Tim Hutchings Ben Kaser • Emily Lapham • Jefferson Lee • Jordan Marshak • Reno Nims • Jessie Rainbow Michael Rude • Shawn Stokes • Tayler Stokes • Jay Sylvano • Nathaniel Whitestone







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FOR ONGOING PLAYTESTS

PLAYTEST QUESTIONS FOR PLAYERS

- Do you feel more or less connected after playing? To yourself? To others?
- What else did you get out of playing?
- Was anything surprising to you?
- Would you want to play this game again? If so, with whom? If not, what would stop you?
- What variants would you be interested in trying? How might that be different?

PLAYTEST QUESTIONS FOR OBSERVER/DESIGNER/FACILITATOR

- What questions do people consistently have about the Storyteller? (Other roles?)
- What do players tend to find confusing, if anything? Where do they get stuck?

ICU By felipe garcia de godoi

ICU is about connection and empathy. Two characters are going to have a important meet, but each one is controlled by two players

Golden Cobra Challenge 2015

by Jonny Garcia jonnyggarcia.wordpress.com jonnyggarcia@gmail.com Theme: Empathy

Players: 4

Facilitators: 1 Time: 2 hours

"People need to have their specialness reflected back in the eyes of others in order to see themselves"

Helen Riess

The Power of Empathy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baHrcC8B4WM

ICU

ICU is a freeform larp wrote for Golden Cobra Challenge 2015 (http://www.goldencobra.org). ICU last for two hours and it needs 4 players plus facilitator. This larp is about empathy and the famous saying that empathy is our ability to step in somebody's shoes. I had the idea for this game after I watched the Ted Talk: The Power of Empathy by Helen Riess (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baHrcC8B4WM). ICU also intends to explore body and self awareness.

During the game the players will have two important meetings, which could be a date, an interview, a meet with an important friend, or anything else. Although there are 4 players playing the game, there are only 2 characters, but two versions of each character. The game is divided in several acts and the facilitator will coordinate the transition between acts.

Empathy

ICU has the intention to talk about empathy. Although must people believe that empathy is something you are born with or without it, actually empathy is something that people can learn. If you plan to run this game, I suggest that you watch the Ted Talk mentioned above. In her talk Helen Riess mentioned the acronym *EMPATHY* which stand for:

Eyes Contact

Muscles of face expression

Posture

Affect

Tone voice

Hearing the whole person

Your response

This larp incorporate those elements during game play as an exercise to notice, to see, the person in front of you.

Characters

20 minutes

In this part players will create characters. First of all separate players in two pairs. Each pair will role-play a different character, but each pair is one character. The first thing to do is to determine what is the purpose of the meeting between characters. It could be any kind of meeting as long it is important and meaningful. Every process I describe next will apply for both pairs.

Each partner will represent a different side from the same character. For example one could be the male side while the other is the female side. One side could be the confident, outgoing, and extroverted while the other side could be the lonely, and depressed side. Although some parts could seem contradictory, just think about how our mood changes. Some days we are happy and somedays we are sad. If you have watched Inside Out from Disney, each player is like the

different characters that exist in everybody's mind: Joy, Fear, Anger, Disgust and Sadness, but players can choose which characteristics they want to represent and they must be a mix of many things. Give some time for player to figure out which parts they represent. Those traits, emotions and feelings will guide players how to role-play their characters.

Each pair must answer the following questions:

What is my name?

How old am I?

What is our profession?

Do I have family?

What I like to do most?

Do I have a partner?

What I like most about my life?

What I'm unhappy about my life?

Introductions

20 minutes

Once they have figured out who they are, ask them pair up side by side. Then ask them to close their eyes and slowly walk forward and hug each other, but keep hugging until you tell them to stop. Give some silence time, at least 20 seconds.

Say aloud: Repeat after me: I'm you, and you are me.

Ask them move one step back but hold hands.

Ask them to open their eyes and make eye contact.

Wait for 10 seconds.

Say aloud indicating one side: Now tell yourself, who is in front of you, what parts of yourself you are.

Say aloud indicating the other side: Now tell yourself, who is in front of you, what parts of yourself you are.

Ask partners to hold hands and stare at each other.

Wait for 10 seconds.

Say aloud: You are seeing yourself in the mirror which means whatever you do your reflection follow you. When I say so you are going to explore your body in terms of positioning, posture, and locomotion. The interesting part is — both of you are in charge, so go slow and without sounds negotiate what you two as a single person are going to do next. If you lost yourself, just catch up. This is an exercise of listening to the person in front of you, and also communicate with them without disrupt the flow. The most important part: *keep eye contact*. **Start.**

Give several minutes at least 5 for them to explore.

Phone Call

10 minutes

During this act both characters are going to call each other to arrange the appointment. Keep in mind that the calling is something important and characters should talk about it, which is a way to set up the expectations for the meeting. The call should be at least 3 minutes long.

In terms of game two calls are going to happen. One side of a character will call one side of the other character, then the remaining sides will call each other. When one part is talking the other part is mirroring the person who is talking. This part do not intend to be funny, so players can skip to mimic mouth movements, but everything else should be mimicked. Also players who are talking must have their backs to each other.

To be clear look at diagram below:



The arrows indicate the direction to where players are looking. Player B is talking with player C while player A is mirroring player B and player D is mirroring player C.

When the call is over Character 1 (player A and B) will step forward and hug each other and then rotate 180 degrees. Same for character 2 (player C and D). They use the hug as way to turn around. After they hug and turn the configuration will be:



After they switch sides, they will make the remaining call.

Meeting

20 minutes

Now is time for the meetings. Using the analog above, player B will meet player C and player A will meet player D. Two meetings will happen at the same time, and they must be isolated from each other. Although there are two meetings happening, there is only one. Both meetings are the same, but somehow they face different sides of each character. This idea is based on the larp called *Group Date* by Sara Williamson.

Confiding

15 minutes

In this partners will talk to each other about what happened during the meeting. So, players A and B (character 1) will talk to each other while players C and D (character 2) do the same. Each group should talk separately. While one player described what happened during the meeting, the listener will mimic the speaker. When the speaker is done, s/he will ask the listener how was the meeting, and then the roles switch: the speaker becomes the listener and mimic while the listener become the speaker. Picture this act as the someone talking aloud in front of the mirror.

When the talking is done, each group should choose one player for a future meeting.

Follow up Call

10 minutes

In this act the chosen player will proceed with another call, and will be positioned themselves just like in the other call:



So in the situation above player A will talk with player D while player C and B mimic their respective partners. Since this is a following up call, some time have past since the last meeting, so the call should be relevant and important since both are excited to meet one more time.

Second Meeting

20 minutes

Different from the other act only the chosen players will meet. The other two players will be called shadows. The shadows will interact with their partners by whisperings things on their ears, which could be suggestion of actions, thought that cross their minds, or even feelings. The shadows, without disturbing the meeting, can talk to each other to decide about things they will say and etc.

Self Acceptance

5 minutes

In the final act we are going to integrate both parts of the characters. Ask partners to face each other.

Say aloud: Repeat after me: I'm you, and you are me.

Ask players to hold hands with their partners.

Say aloud: Now one by one please say to your partner why you need them as part of yourself.

Ask players to hug each other.

Say aloud: Repeat after me: I'm you, and you are me.

Debrief

After the game is over give couple minutes for players catch up their breath and then proceeded with the debrief. Make sure all players have proper time to speak about their experiences and feelings throughout the game. Also, please ask the following questions:

How comfortable were you to establish a connection to your partner?

Did you learn anything about empathy by playing this game? If yes, what did you learn?

What was the most memorable moment for you?

Appendix - Characters

What is my name?
How old am I?
What is our profession?
Do I have family?
What I like to do most and why?
Do I have a partner?
Do mave a partners
What I like most about my life?
What I'm unhappy about my life?

Appendix - Characters

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How old am I?
What is our profession?
Do I have family?
What I like to do most and why?
Do I have a partner?
Do i nave a partner:
What I like most about my life?
What I'm unhappy about my life?
<i>"</i>

Appendix - Introductions

Say aloud: Repeat after me: I'm you, and you are me.

Ask them move one step back but hold hands.

Ask them to open their eyes and make eye contact. Wait for 10 seconds.

Say aloud indicating one side: Now tell yourself, who is in front of you, what parts of yourself you are.

Say aloud indicating the other side: Now tell yourself who, is in front of you, what parts of yourself you are.

Ask partners to hold hands and stare at each other. Wait for 10 seconds.

Say aloud: You are seeing yourself in the mirror which means whatever you do your reflection follow you. When I say so you are going to explore your body in terms of positioning, posture, and locomotion. The interesting part is — both of you are in charge, so go slow and without sounds negotiate what you two as a single person are going to do next. If you lost yourself, just catch up. This is an exercise of listening to the person in front of you, and also communicate with them without disrupt the flow. The most important part: *keep eye contact.* **Start**.

Give several minutes at least 5 for them to explore.

Appendix - Self Acceptance

Ask partners to face each other.

Say aloud: Repeat after me: I'm you, and you are me.

Ask players to hold hands with their partners.

Say aloud: Now one by one please say to your partner why you need them as part of yourself.

Ask players to hug each other.

Say aloud: Repeat after me: I'm you, and you are me.

Cheat Sheet

Intro

2 character role-played by 4 people The game is about Empathy

Characters - 20 minutes

What kind of meeting?

Players decide which parts they represent

Answer questions — Appendix - Characters

Introductions - 10 minutes

Follow orientations — Appendix - Introduction Mimic each other for 5 minutes

Phone Call - 10 minutes

Body positioning

Make a call while partners mimic

Switch by hugging

Make the second call while partners mimic

Meeting - 20 minutes

Two meetings at the same time

Confiding - 15 minutes

Partners get together and share their meetings while the other partner mimic

Decide who is going to meet again

Follow up call - 10 minutes

Body positioning

Make a call while partners mimic

Second meeting - 20 minutes

Only one meeting

Shadows whispers

Self Acceptance - 5 minutes

Follow orientation — Appendix - Self Acceptance

Debrief

Discuss and answer three questions

IN THE DARK BY CLINTON DREISBACH

In the Dark is a freeform live-action interrogation game for four players. It is about how the line between truth and lies breaks down under pressure.

In the Dark

a LARP for 4 people by Clinton Dreisbach

This live-action game is for 4 people and can be played in 1 hour after setup. It uses the following techniques:

- Hidden information
- Power dynamics
- Sensory deprivation (darkness)
- Touch

You will need:

- A small lightless space (The Box), big enough to fit two people comfortably but small enough that they will touch. An empty closet works best for this.
- A space outside the Box with two chairs (The Chamber)
- Another space that cannot be seen from the Chamber (the Observation Area)
- Two copies of each playsheet

This game does not use a facilitator but has the possibility to make participants uncomfortable, so be clear about all rules during setup. In particular, make sure to establish an unambiguous signal that any participant can give at any time to end the game.

Setup

Two players are chosen to be the Interrogators. The other two players are the Captives.

Use a six-sided die to determine the role for the Interrogators and Captives. Using the following list, roll once to find out which of the six roles the Interrogators are in, and then roll again using the sub-list to find out which role the Captives are in.

- 1. Federal agents
 - o 1-2. Cops
 - o 3-4. Crime lords
 - o 5-6. Low-life criminals
- 2. Cops
 - o 1-2. Dirty cops
 - o 3-4. Crime lords
 - 5-6. Low-life criminals

- 3. Dirty cops
 - o 1-2. Cops
 - o 3-4. Low-lifes
 - o 5-6. Vigilantes
- 4. Vigilantes
 - o 1-2. Dirty cops
 - o 3-4. Crime lords
 - o 5-6. Low-lifes
- 5. Crime lords
 - o 1-2. Cops
 - o 3-4. Federal agents
 - o 5-6. Vigilantes
- 6. Low-life criminals
 - o 1-2. Vigilantes
 - o 3-4. Crime lords
 - 5-6. Low-life criminals

Example: Skyler, Quinn, Kendall, and Indigo are going to play. Skyler and Quinn are the Interrogators and roll a 3, making them dirty cops. Kendall and Indigo then roll a 5, making them vigilantes.

The Interrogators and the Captives should take the play-sheet for their role. Read through your sheet and fill it out. Feel free to write other details like your religion, ethnicity, college, or other details.

Interrogators have:

- something they want
- something they're vulnerable to

Captives have:

- some information
- a personal detail they might be able to use

Introduce the characters you are playing. The only questions you must answer are the one or two italicized questions at the top of the page. You can answer any other questions with truth or lies.

Once you know the characters, talk through the dynamic if you need to in order to understand the situation.

Physical setup

Once the characters are introduced, set up the physical space. You will need a space for the Box, the Chamber, and the Observation Area. Optimally, these will all be in one building next to each other. Feel free to play with the setup for these spaces. For example, you may want a table in the Chamber, or a white noise generator for the Box.

The Box is meant to be a small lightless space. Depending on the Interrogators, this might represent a car trunk, a closet, a windowless cell, or something else. The Interrogators should describe it now.

The Chamber is where interrogations happen. It should be set up so that any loud talking or shouting can be heard in the Box, but normal voices cannot. The Interrogators should describe it now.

The Observation Area is either a physical or emotional space in the game, depending on the setup. Interrogators take Captives there when they are done with them so that the Captive can hear what happens next, but not see it. It should be set up so that the Chamber can be heard from it.

Rules

The point of the game for the Interrogators is to:

- get the information you want
- do not believe false information

The Interrogators do not want to:

- accept false information as truth
- kill or release Captives without getting the truth
- kill or hurt Captives that fall in a category they have a soft spot for
- believe Captives that are trying to play on their soft spots by lying

The Interrogators *must*:

release Captives that play on their soft spot if they believe the Captive

The point of the game for the Captives is to:

- not give actual information
- get the Interrogators to believe their lies
- get immunity or released

The Captives do not want to:

- tell truth the Interrogators want to know (truth that the Interrogators don't need is fine)
- die (unless they have a death wish)

During the game, the Interrogators will interrogate the Captives using any methods they want to unless they have a prohibition (killing for some play-sheets.)

The Laws of the Game

The Interrogators cannot have more than one Captive in the Chamber at the same time.

The Interrogators cannot enter the Box except to pull someone out.

The Captives cannot independently move.

Captives that are dead, given immunity, or released are sent to the Observation Room.

No one in the Observation Room is allowed to talk.

No actual violence between players is allowed.

Interrogators can be violent toward Captives through simulation. In order to commit violence, place your open hand against where you will commit violence and say what you are doing. You can only do this to the head, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. All other areas are off limits.

If any player wants the game to end at any point for any reason, they can and all rules about movement and talking are removed.

After the game

All players should take a few minutes to reflect then sit down with refreshments to talk about the game. While there aren't clear rules for winning and losing, you should compare your play-sheets that you wrote on to see who got what they wanted.

Federal Agent

You're an agent for an organization most people never even hear of, something spooky enough that it doesn't even go by a three-letter acronym.

What's the name you give?
What's the name of your organization?

If you are the Interrogators:

You cannot kill the Captives.
You can grant immunity to one Captive.

You want to know something: *(choose one with your teammate)*

- the key to capturing an international terrorist
- information that will bring down a smuggling ring
- a secret that will overturn a wrongful conviction

You have a soft spot for: (choose one by yourself)

- people with families
- people who are truly terrified
- people who are dying

If you are the Captives:

You know something: (choose one by yourself and write down the information)

- when and where the raid on the Interrogators is happening
- the name of a mole in the Interrogators' organization
- the codename of the case against the Interrogators

- You have a family you love and who loves you
- This is your first case and you are terrified
- You're willing to help the Interrogators from the inside

Cops

You're a state or local police officer, a detective on the beat.

What is your name? Who's your captain?

If you are the Interrogators:

You cannot kill the Captives.

You can let one Captive off the hook this time.

You want to know something: (choose one with your teammate)

- the name of a high-level criminal
- the location of a piece of evidence you need
- when an illegal deal is happening

You have a soft spot for: (choose one by yourself)

- people with families
- ex-cops
- addicts

If you are the Captives:

You know something: (choose one by yourself and write down the information)

- when and where the raid on the Interrogators is happening
- the name of an unknown rival to the Interrogators
- a piece of evidence the Interrogators don't know about

- You have a family you love and who loves you
- This is your first case and you are terrified
- You are a true believer in a higher power

Dirty Cops

You're a cop gone bad, an abuser of power that either pursues your own crimes or lets others' crimes slide for payoff.

What is your name? Who's your captain? What's your vice?

If you are the Interrogators:

You can kill the Captives unless they are law enforcement.

You want to know something: (choose one with your teammate)

- the name of a high-level criminal
- the location of a piece of damning evidence
- where the person you're looking for is hiding

You have a soft spot for: (choose one by yourself)

- true believers
- ex-cops
- people who are terrified

If you are the Captives:

You know something: (choose one by yourself and write down the information)

- when and where the raid on the Interrogators is happening
- the name of a mole in the Interrogators' organization
- where a smoking gun (an actual gun or something else) is hidden

- You have a family you love and who loves you
- You are an addict
- You're willing to help the Interrogators from the inside

Vigilantes

You are a person driven to fight crime not by a badge but by some personal quest. What you're doing is illegal, putting you in league with those you hate.

What's your persona? What happened to you?

If you are the Interrogators:

You can / cannot kill the Captives. (Choose this but do not reveal it.)

You want to know something: (choose one by yourself)

- the name of the person who did whatever it is that set you off
- where the person you're looking for is hiding
- a secret that will overturn a wrongful conviction

You have a soft spot for: (choose one by yourself)

- true believers
- people with families
- people who are terrified

If you are the Captives:

You know something: (choose one by yourself and write down the information)

- the name of a mole in the Interrogators' organization
- where a smoking gun (an actual gun or something else) is hidden
- the location of an innocent being hunted

- You are a true believer in a higher power / justice
- You have no one in your life
- You have a death wish

Crime Lords

You are high up in a criminal empire, maybe even running it. Your life has been a series of ruthless calculations.

What's the name you go by? What's your empire?

If you are the Interrogators:

You can kill the Captives.

You want to know something: (choose one by yourself)

- when and where a raid is happening
- the name of the mole in your organization
- the name and location of an innocent person who saw something they shouldn't

You have a soft spot for: (choose one by yourself)

- people with a death wish
- people you can make work for you
- people who are dying

If you are the Captives:

You know something: (choose one by yourself and write down the information)

- the name of the mole in the Interrogator's organization
- where a smoking gun (an actual gun or something else) is hidden
- a piece of evidence the Interrogators don't know about

- You have no one in your life
- You have a terminal illness
- You are an ex-cop

Low-Life Criminals

You're not anyone important, just a street-level thug. You've got people above you putting pressure on you, so you're putting it on someone else.

What is the name you go by?

If you are the Interrogators:

You can kill the Captives.

You want to know something: *(choose one with your teammate)*

- when and where a shakedown is happening
- the name of the person interfering with your business
- where the person you're looking for is hiding

You have a soft spot for: (choose one by yourself)

- people with families
- people who served time
- addicts

If you are the Captives:

You know something: (choose one by yourself and write down the information)

- your boss's name
- where a smoking gun (an actual gun or something else) is hidden
- when and where a shakedown is happening

- You are an addict
- You are terrified of the Interrogators
- You're undercover and are one of the Interrogators

IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR

BY SCOTT SLOMIANY

Only by retelling stories from earlier in their lives can residents of an old folks home be transported away from what remains of their frail existence.



"It Was a Very Good Year" lyrics by Ervin 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=21ai9ZcQVto

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 if 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.

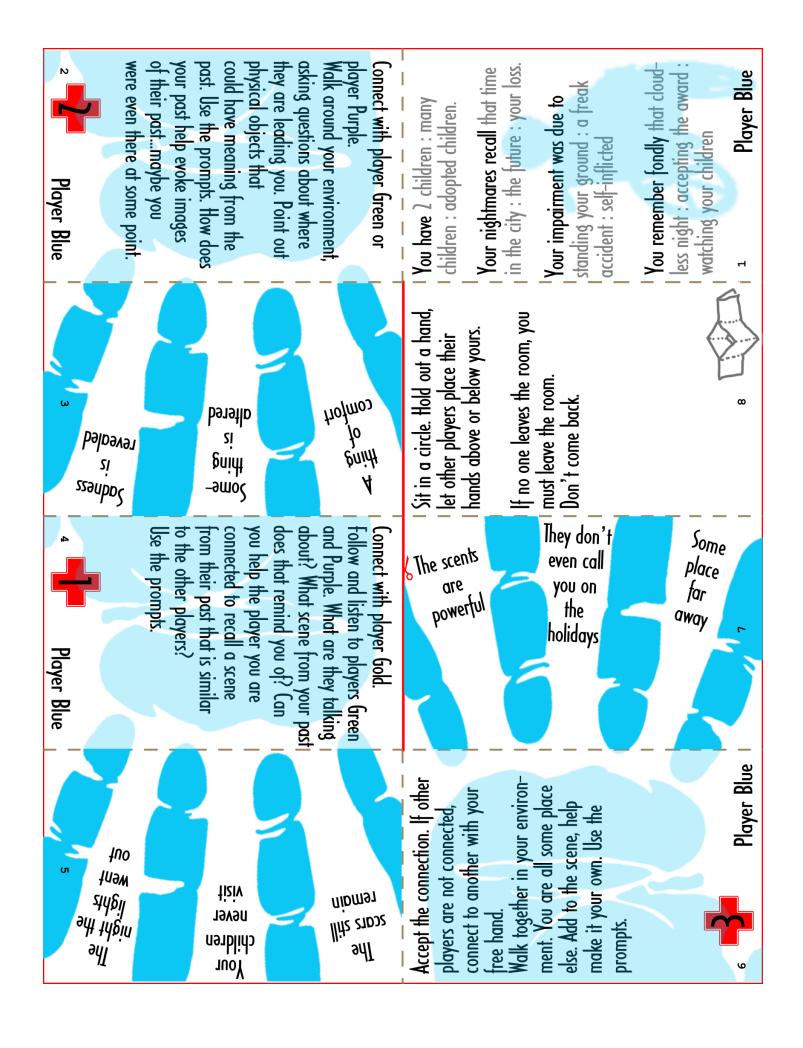
The scenes:

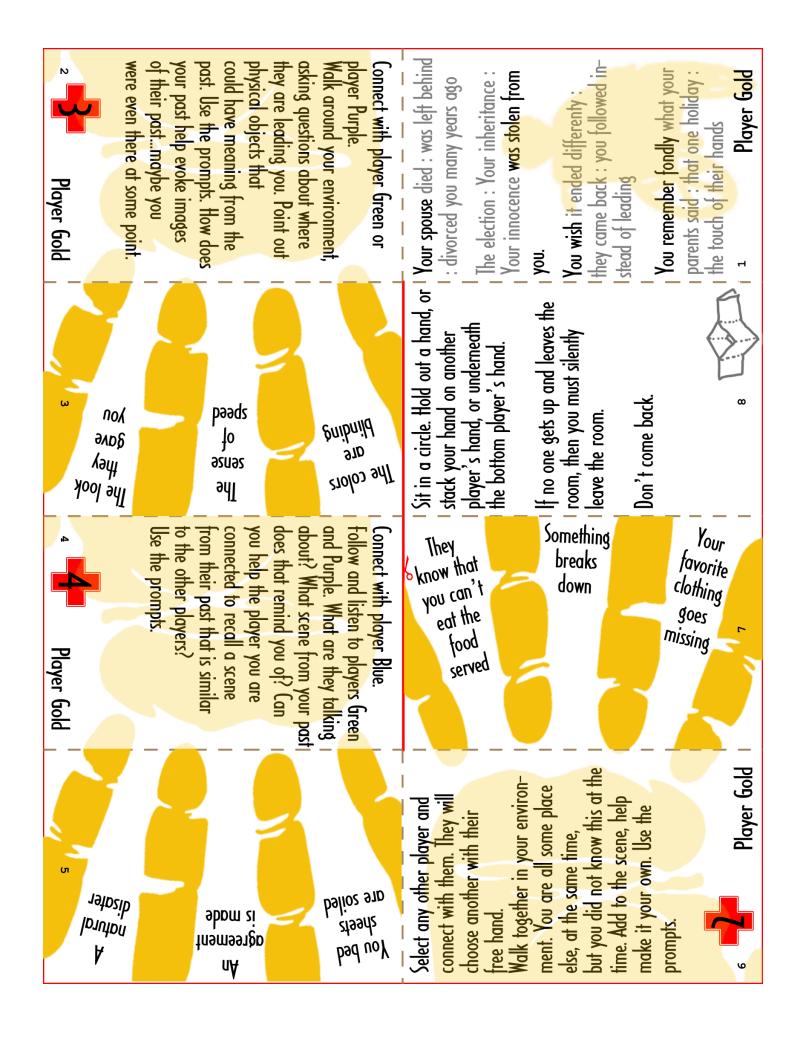
Below is a list of scenes that the player will play through, and what pages they will reference in their booklets. A scene continues until everyone sits down. At which point the next scene on the list commences.

SCENE	What happens						
1	All players turn to pages 2 and 3 in their booklets, and follow the instructions.						
2	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 medicationyou DEFINITELY don't want to take that (why would that be?)						
	ROLL Med Type for 1 Ongoing physical injury 2 Mental ailment 3 Post-surgery 4 Stimulant/anti-depressant 5 Bathroom issues 6 Mystery /experimental						
3	All players turn to pages 4 and 5 in their booklets, and follow the instructions.						
4	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. 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						
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.						

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 youmaybe they were even there? Player Green	You have survived multiple wars: economic collapse: the disease. You were/are never married: secretly married: married multiple filmes. You wish you had not caused that pain: you stood up for the rights of others: not been involved. You remember fondly the lake house: the party of the century: that one victory.
ot A of bnaint and blasint busint bus	Sit in a circle. Hold out a hand, or stack your hand on another player's hand, or underneath the bottom player's hand. If you are second to the top hand in the stack, stand up and quietly leave the room. Don't come back. Pou have survived multiple wars economic collapse: the disease. You were/are never married: Secretly married: married multiplimes. You wish you had not caused the pain; you stood up for the right of others: not been involved. You remember fondly the lake house: the party of the century that one victory.
Connect with player Purple. Walk with them, you are familiar with what they describe, but they are interpreting things wrong. Iry 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. Player Green	Who watched which a nurse lick some-one's food You know which nurse stole your jewelry
John how and how	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.

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 youmaybe they were even there? Player Purple	You have no children by choice: by death: by physical impairment. You always thought your glory days never happened: were long past: were still to come You wish you had said yes: said no: spoke up and did more than just watch. You remember fondly your school days: your business success: that time on the road.
Anose—fhing thing hing hing hing hing hing hing hing	Sit in a circle. Hold out a hand, or I You have no children by choice stack your hand on another by death: by physical impairment player's hand, or underneath the bottom player's hand. If your hand is one of the two middle hands in the stack, remove I You wish you had said yes: said it and place it on top. If exactly one other player leaves I You remember fondly your school the room, you must leave after days: your business success: they have left. Don't come back. If exactly one other player leaves I You remember fondly your school the room, you must leave after days: your business success: that time on the road.
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. Player Purple	A thing you've worn the same to see again? here for a week
Your thing horgotten bayes run does does	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.





JUST A LITTLE PERIL

BY NATHAN HOOK

Someone makes a small but perilous request of the person who loves them.

Maybe we could have just a lilttle peril?

Golden Cobra 2015 entry: Just a Little Peril

By Nathan Hook

Introduction

Despite surveys showing 'kinky' recreational activities are extremely common it is still stigmatised and officially classified as a mental illness in many countries; this scenario addresses this marginalised group. It is about characters in a loving relationship discussing a kinky activity, so is only appropriate for adult players; it is not expected to include any dark or abuse-related themes.

This is a short scenario is written for two players by default, but variations for different numbers of players are included at the end. It does not need an organiser and the players should fully read this text. It should take under two hours to play. It can be played in one room with a few pieces of furniture and a pencil. A timer (e.g. phone app) is useful, but it's possible to play without this.

Pre-play exercises

Character creation 10 minutes

The two characters have been in a stable relationship for a few months. They have both had a one or a few relationships previously but this relationship currently feels to both of them that it is serious and that it could last long-term. To begin, together define few facts about the characters:

- Name. Each player should pick a number of the character of the other player, but the player can veto the choice if they need to. Picking the name of the actual ex-partner or a celebrity you find attractive is encouraged but not required.
- Age. The two characters are in the 25ish-45ish age range. Pick an age within this. A contrasting age might colour the relationship.
- Occupation. Each player should pick what job their character currently does, and what job they aspire to eventually. This isn't directly what the scenario is about, but it provides a good quick basis for other background details, such as income, social class and education levels. A contrast in these might colour the relationhip.
- Housing. Decide if the characters actually live together or close by. Do they separately rent or does one have a mortgage and the other pays rent to them (or stays for free)? Discussing mortgages is quick way to feel like a couple.

It is suggested that players play their own gender, and thus the sexual orientation of the characters is set to fit in with this.

After this, pick one character as the Vanilla character, and one character as the Kinky character. Play rock-paper-scissors and the winner can choose which is which. This element of randomness strengthens the play alibi for the players (since you can feel that the scenario made you do it).

The Kinky character is someone who enjoys being spanked both with bare hand and implements by a loving partner. They got introduced to this by a previous partner (whether they mention that fact or not is up to them) so know they enjoy it and they would like the person they love to spank them as part of their regular sexual activities.

The vanilla character has had no experience of any 'kinky' activities and is a peaceful non-violent person who would never dream of wanting to cause pain to anyone, especially not the person they love.

Meta-techniques – physical play

Please take a moment to agree some safe words (e.g. 'brake' and 'cut') in case they are needed for any reason.

For simplicity of presentation, this larp is written on the assumption the players are comfortable with hugging. If this is not the case, when reading this text please replace all references to 'hugging' or 'snuggling' with 'hand holding' instead, both in workshops and in play.

It is possible during play that one character might decide to spank the other. This scenario is written on the assumption the players do not want to actually do this. To represent this, the player of the receiving character holds out their hand, palm down. The player of the giving character lightly taps the back of their hand, as if slapping it. They can do this with their own hand to represent using their bare hand or with a pencil to represent using an implement. The players may wish to assume an appropriate physical posture while doing this. Remember to react appropriately verbally to what is happening to your character.

Workshop 5 minutes

Firstly, hug each other for a full minute. Then, carry out this workshop exercise. It's best to read the scenario and arrange the room first, so you can start play as soon as this is done.

The payers sit opposite each other, make eye contact, and hold each other's hands. Taking it in turn, the two players say a phrase back and forth to each other. Do this for three minutes.

The player of the Vanilla character has three phrases. They can choose which to say each turn, but try to get all of them in at least a few times.

"I love you."

"I really care about you."

"I would never harm you."

The player of the kinky character has three phrases. They can choose which each turn, but try to get all of them in at least a few times.

"I love you."

"I really care about you."

"I want you to hurt me."

When this is complete, you are now ready to play.

<u>Play</u>

The scenario is presented here in three parts, but consists of one long scene without breaks that naturally flows together. It follows a tight-to-loose structure in that it starts with some tight structure described below to start the scene off, but becomes increasingly open ended.

Premise and setup

The two characters have both finished a week at work and had dinner at home together earlier. It's now late, and they are relaxing snuggling on a sofa half-watching a classic favourite film (pick one both players know) that happens to be on TV before bed. Arrange the furniture you have available to represent this. If you have sufficient space, designate an area with other furniture to represent the bedroom which the characters might move to later. If you are playing in a home, you can use the location as it is and put a film on two thirds of the way through with low volume in the background.

Set a timer to go off after 40 minutes when you start play. When it goes off, the film ends.

Play, Part one 10 minutes

Take one minute just to enjoy snuggling together and get comfortable, enjoying the moment.

Start by making idle small talk about the film for a few minutes; both characters have seen it before, so no one minds the interruptions. For example, perhaps repeat classic lines or joke about how bad the acting or writing is or how dated the special effects look.

Gradually move to small talk about personal stuff – events at work, what is for dinner tomorrow, how things are with the parents, mutual friends, short-term plans to go somewhere together. Do this for about five minutes.

Play, Part two 30 minutes

At this point when it feels right in the conversation, the Kinky character decides to raise a subject which been on their mind that they have been looking for the right time to discuss. The Kinky character has decided to 'out' themselves as someone who enjoys 'kinky' play, and in particular that they enjoy being spanked. How to raise this is deliberately not defined so the character can decide what line to take, and thinking about what line to take in this discussion is part of their internal play up to this point. Remember the vanilla character is a peaceful person and has had no experience of any 'kinky' activities.

Let this scene play out naturally for as long as it needs. When the timer you set at the start goes off the film ends. While the characters probably were not watching it at this point, this prompts them that it is late and they should at least think about going to bed.

Play, Part three up to 30 minutes

The characters might decide to stay where they are and carry on the discussion; it's late, but they don't have work tomorrow. One or both of them might go to bed at some point. They might snuggle, or one might not feel like having anything to do with the other. The conversation might continue, or they might be a long awkward silence. The Kink character might persuade the Vanilla character to

actually try it, maybe just with their hand at first. Maybe the Vanilla character will feel better about it if they agree some safe words (different to the scenario safe words)? Maybe the kinky character will want to discuss some of the different implements and how they feel. Maybe they will have a fight and one might end sleeping on the sofa instead.

Play this scene for as long as it needs. After 30 minutes or so, the characters are too tired to keep going and fall asleep, ending the play. Alternatively if the characters decide to have sex, play ends with a fade to black as they are about to do this.

Post-play exercises

Derole exercise 1 minute

Stand opposite each other. Look each other in the eye. Take a deep breath together. Enjoy a last hug. Take a small step back. Take a deep breath together. Have a firm handshake, as if saying goodbye to the other person. Both turn around. Take another deep breath. Take a few steps away.

Debrief 14 minutes

Put the furniture back in its original place, then sit down and chat about how the experience was for a few minutes. You might discuss his close to home the characters and experience felt if you want to, but you absolutely don't have to

Variable numbers of players

For three players, the characters are in a polyamorous relationship. You will need to decide whether to have two Vanilla or two Kinky characters (and thus one of the other) in the scenario. When creating characters, you should also decide whether the relationship is V-shaped (two characters in love with one person, who loves them both) or triangle shaped (each character loves both of the others). You should carry out the workshop exercises twice, between each vanilla-kinky character combination. Decide casting as seems most appropriate.

Playing with four players is similar to three players, with two Vanilla and two Kinky characters. You should discuss the nature of their relationship together; the easiest option is that all are in love with all the others, but you could decide to a particular pair are only friends. Again you should repeat the workshop exercises as needed.

For one player, play the kinky character at home alone. Your partner is working late, but you are planning to raise the topic with them when they get home. Imagine they are with you (in an empty chair) and practice the conversation imaging their replies. Note it is you the character, not you the player who is pretending they are with you.

Conclusion

Talking about personal tastes is hard for many people, but all relationships are built on communication. I hope this scenario has been a useful experience that may generalise to discussing a range of awkward topics.

Play safely, in every sense.

JUST LUNCH BY HEATHER SILSBEE

Just Lunch is a game about how three women navigate fading friendships, societal expectations, and social anxiety during one 60-minute lunch.

BEST USE OF THEMES/TECHNIQUES FOR EVOKING EMPATHY

Just Lunch

a freeform larp about being a woman with social anxiety by Heather Silsbee

You Need:

- Three players
- A clock or timer with a large, easy-to-read display
- A writing utensil for each player
- Printouts of the character sheets included with these rules
- A table and three chairs
- Three blank note cards
- About two hours

The Situation

Marian, Jasmine, and Rachel were all born in the same small midwestern town. They went to the same schools for most of their lives and, in high school, developed a close friendship. For those four years they were inseparable. But when they graduated, they realized they all had different interests and life goals. They all went in different directions, geographically and otherwise. Now it's been more than 5 years since they have seen each other or really talked. Through social media posts, Rachel discovered that they would all be in Chicago on the same weekend and insisted that they meet up. Marian suggested a new, highly reviewed restaurant and everyone agreed to carve out an hour of their day for lunch and catching up.

Setting

The only setting you need to play *Just Lunch* is a table and chairs. But you can optionally play at an actual restaurant or cafe. If you want to do this, the players should decide on characters ahead of time and show up in-character. All of the rules are the same, except you can skip the "place your order" step at the beginning of play, since you will actually be ordering from the restaurant. Please be respectful of the restaurant property, staff, and customers. Break character or stop play at moments if necessary.

How to Play

Your main in-character task in Just Lunch is simply to have a conversation with your friends over lunch. Talk about anything you would normally discuss with a friend you haven't seen in awhile. Reminisce on past memories from your hometown or high school, ask about your friend's new life, or talk about your own. If you can't think of anything else, talk about the weather in Chicago. Just keep the conversation going. You can and should define anything about the world and your characters' relationships that you would like during play. Just try not to invent important facts about others' characters without checking in with them first. An easy way

to do this without breaking character is to ask a question about something you may have forgotten, "Didn't you go to senior prom with Carlos?"

Each character has a list of anxieties about the situation or their lives in general. They may be certain topics of conversation, aspects of the restaurant setting, physical needs, or just general negative expectations. Always be aware of your anxieties in play. If one of your anxieties if triggered, choose one of two options: Cover, or Concede.

Choosing to Cover means that you successfully cover up your anxiety and are able to keep your cool in the situation. React with a smooth, socially acceptable behavior: a smile and nod, a follow-up question, laughter, etc. Then, shade in one box on your energy meter, indicating that your energy is drained and it is a little harder for you to participate in the social situation. Covering up anxiety is exhausting.

Choosing Concede means that you give in to what your anxiety wants you to do. Choose a behavior from your "Concede behaviors" list and do it. Each character's concede behaviors list is different, since people react to anxiety in different ways. You may need to leave the room for a few minutes, abruptly ask to change the topic of conversation, or answer a question in a short, brusque manner. After performing the behavior, add a new anxiety to your list that's related to your behavior. In order to preserve your energy, you may have made a social blunder or offended someone. You may now be worried that your friend thinks you're rude, or be more intent on avoiding a certain situation. Your energy meter stays the same.

If you fill up your energy meter, you have run out of energy to deal with the situation. You need to excuse yourself and leave the restaurant as quickly as possible. Feel free to make up an excuse (pull out your cell phone and pretend to recieve an important call, feign food poisoning) or just say you need to go and do it. Move your character sheet to the middle of the table so everyone can see that you're leaving because your character ran out of energy, not because you, as a player, need to leave the game.

One of your jobs as a player is to push on the other characters' buttons. Pay attention when the characters are introduced and aim to touch on their anxieties. That being said, don't force a conversation just to make another character anxious, or repeatedly harp on one of another character's sensitive topics. You should also aim to make the conversation natural and respond how your character would, knowing that they likely still care about their friends' comfort. If you suspect that another player is feeling very uncomfortable, check in with them out-of-character.

Player Safety

This game includes sensitive content and may cause actual anxiety or other negative reactions. So it is particularly important to implement safety tools, touch boundaries, and an open door

policy. I recommend using the safe words "Cut" and "Brake." Saying Cut during play means that the larp needs to stop, either just for a moment or permanently. Say Cut if you feel very uncomfortable or unsafe and don't want to continue the game as it's going. You can also say it if you have some other emergency and need to stop the game for a while. Saying "Brake" means that you're okay continuing the larp right now, but it's getting a little intense. If someone says "Brake" you can continue at the current level of play intensity, but don't push any further. For example, you may say "Brake" if someone touches your arm and you're okay with that, but don't want any additional physical contact.

Speaking of physical contact, another great safety practice is to establish touch boundaries before play. Before starting the game, each player should say where they are comfortable being touched during the game (if anywhere). In *Just Lunch*, the two most likely points of physical contact are giving hugs, or lightly touching someone's arm or shoulder during conversation. So instead of asking for each person's boundaries, you could say "Is everyone okay with brief hugs? How about touching the arms or shoulders?" If so, limit your physical contact to those areas. If not, respect other players' specific boundaries or just agree not to have any physical contact in the game.

Every game of *Just Lunch* should also have an "open door policy." That means that everyone should agree that anyone can leave the game at any time without explanation. Everyone also agrees that no one will be judged for leaving, and others won't speculate about why any person left. This is very important for a game about anxiety, since it's very possible that a person having actual anxiety may need to leave without explanation.

Before Play

Everyone should look at the possible character descriptions and anxieties and pick one that appeals to them. Jasmine is the character with the most severe anxiety and therefore is the most likely to have to leave the game early. Rachel is an extrovert and one of her anxieties is a lull in the conversation, so it may often be her responsibility to think of new topics to keep the conversation going. Marion's character is dealing with anxieties about her sexuality. Make sure the player who picks each character is okay with her particular challenges.

After giving everyone several minutes to read through their entire sheet, read your sheet aloud, including your list of anxieties. This will remind everyone of what each character is like, and let them know what topics you may want to bring up in play.

Starting Play

Set your timer to 60 minutes. Or, if using a clock, make sure everyone notes down the time when you start, and what time you will end: 60 minutes later. The timer is meant to create a sense of nervous energy from the start, as would be present in such a situation. In an awkward situation

people will often want to check the time to see how much longer they will need to deal with it, or, to make sure they are able to fit in all of the things they want to talk about. Having the time visible also serves the practical purpose of allowing everyone to know when to end the game without needing someone else to stop you.

Enter the play space. All of the in-character play in *Just Lunch* happens at or immediately around the table. Sometimes players may need or want to leave this area, either for in-game or out-of-game reasons. If they do, they are temporarily out of play, and their character cannot hear or see what is going on at the table. No one should follow another player out of the play space to have a scene elsewhere. When you're all ready to begin, the players should enter the play space one by one and sit down. They should greet each other when entering. After all players have entered, greeted the others, and placed any belonging at the table, they should get up one by one to place their order. Only one person should place their order at one time, so the other two remain at the table and continue the game.

Place your order. The restaurant is a cafeteria-style self-serve place. Customers go to the counter and place their order and bring it back to the table. When it's your turn to place your order, grab a notecard and a pen/pencil and go off somewhere else nearby. Write down your order on the notecard. Wait about 3 minutes before going back to the table.

At the end of play time all remaining characters should say goodbye to the others and leave the play space.

Playing Anxiety

Everyone has likely had a taste of social anxiety at some point in their life—being afraid of saying the wrong thing on a first date with someone you like, arriving to a party early and not seeing anyone you know, or making a mistake at work and being afraid of what your boss will think. But for some people, those feelings are an integral part of everyday life. Making a phone call, passing someone on the sidewalk, sending an email that may inconvenience someone, walking through a busy grocery store, needing to make small talk with your hair stylist, thinking again and again about the "wrong" thing you did yesterday, last week, or last month. It's exhausting to say the least. And you can easily get stuck in an anxious loop that's hard to get out of. The very thing you need to do to calm your anxiety may make you stand out in the situation, causing more, or different, anxiety.

Women in particular are held up to certain social standards that make things even more complicated. Women are expected to be social creatures, to go places in groups, to smile and look approachable, to hug their friends, to be polite, to have certain body language, to look pretty when out in public. All of these things can be exhausting for any woman, and even more so when you have to "fake it" while covering up your anxiety.

The three women in *Just Lunch* have varying levels of anxiety about their situation. But they're all held up to these same standards, as well as the conventions of what is "normal" to do in public and what is expected behavior between friends who no longer know each other very well. Keep this in mind during play. If you're in a situation that you think would cause your character anxiety but is not listed on their sheet, feel free to choose Cover or Concede action as if it were on the list.

In My Head

Everyone has different experiences with anxiety and reacts to it in a different way, so don't worry too much about "getting it right." But for anyone who may still be struggling with how to embody the anxieties of their character, I'll offer my experience as one specific example:

My social anxiety is most severe when I'm expected to interact socially with multiple people I don't know. Particularly rough are large parties, or meeting several new people at once. I already tend to be quiet, but in those situations I can shut down and barely talk at all unless asked a direct question. Even if I'm totally comfortable with the topic of conversation, I'm reluctant to give my input out of fear that the others will think I'm rude for inserting myself in their discussion, or that I'll say the wrong thing and make a bad impression. Meanwhile I'm worried that I'm making the wrong impression by staying quiet, but that behavior is more in my comfort zone. If I feel anxious for too long I will feel the need to escape the situation and cry. That's my "concede" behavior in those circumstances. I hate to cry in front of other people and almost never will, but if I have a chance to escape to place I consider safe I may cry there, which does help. But then I worry that people will be able to tell that I've been crying and ask me what's wrong, etc. You can see where the cyclical thinking and accumulating anxieties come in.

That's all pretty much the worst case scenario for me. With people I know well I'm generally more comfortable, but there are still some sticking points. If a conversation is particularly important to me I get stressed out and often find it hard to find the right words to say, like my mind goes blank for a minute, which can cause more anxiety. I also often worry that others will think I'm rude or uninterested so I overcompensate by making a particular effort to smile and nod a lot, or look very thoughtful so that they know I'm paying attention. That's my attempt to cover. I know that attempt fails sometimes because occasionally someone will notice my enthusiastic nodding, stop, and ask if I already know about whatever they're saying. Often after social interactions, even a very brief one such as waving to a coworker in the hallway, I will go back over the event in my mind for a few minutes wondering if I should have done something differently. As I get older I get better at reminding myself that those things don't really matter and stopping the cycling thoughts. In a way I'm lucky that I'm an introvert, so I

don't feel a desire to often put myself in the social situations that stress me out. But that also means that even the best interactions drain my energy a little, so social anxiety can pretty easily compound on top of that.

Marian

Determined, snarky, adventurous.

You did as many activities as you could in high school and still do. You work hard at whatever you set out to do and usually succeed. You went to a big state college and studied Communications and now work for a marketing firm. You have always found it a little hard to make friends even though you try hard at that too. It might be that you intimidate people and that puts them off. It seems that people also think you're strange because you never date anyone. In college you realized that you are asexual, something you always felt but never had a word for. You're proud of your sexuality and want to be an advocate for others but really hate "coming out" to people and dealing with all the questions they have, so you usually try to avoid the subject. You have also always been very aware of your appearance. People tend to find you attractive and tell you that, which is very awkward for you. Now that you're in a corporate setting you are trying to perfect the art of looking professional and feminine without drawing extra attention. You're in Chicago for a business conference. You don't have very high expectations for this lunch. You're already so busy with the conference that it was hard to find an hour to spare, and now you're expected to be excited to make small talk. Besides, you'll all just be going back to your separate lives, so there's no use in getting re-attached.

Anxieties:

- Extended conversation or questions about sex, dating, or relationships
- Comments on your physical appearance
- Making someone else uncomfortable (or seeming to)

Concede behaviors:

- Abruptly ask to change the topic of conversation
- Refuse to answer a question, or answer it rudely
- Leave the room for a few minutes

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Jasmine

Introverted, clever, considerate.

You were always the "smart one" in school and got excellent grades without trying very hard. You got a partial scholarship a small, prestigious college in Chicago and graduated a couple years ago. You loved college and were very comfortable there. Well, except for the obligatory social events, but you were usually able to avoid those and stick to interacting with people in a few low-key clubs and organizations. But when it was time to go out on your own you kind of froze and didn't know what to do. You have a job at a bookstore, which you really like most of the time. But it barely pays your rent and minimum student loan payments. And you, and your boss, know that the customer service portions of the job don't particularly suit you. You are anxious about seeing Marian and Rachel again. You're afraid you won't have anything in common anymore and won't have anything to talk about. You don't want anyone to judge you for not having a real career, and there are plenty of things about high school that you'd rather not talk about again. You can't afford to buy anything at this restaurant, but know that it's expected that you get something.

Anxieties:

- Having to order something at the restaurant
 - This anxiety automatically triggers when you place your order. If you choose to Cover, order a full meal, even though you can't afford it. If you choose Concede, just order a glass of water, and add the following anxiety "Someone asking about your order"
- Conversations about money
- Being the focus of a conversation for too long
- Extended conversations about high school social events
- Causing a lull in the conversation

•

Concede behaviors:

- Leave the room for a few minutes
- Try not to talk for a few minutes;
 answer direct questions in as few words
 as possible
- Start a new topic of conversation that is awkward or seems out-of-place

Energy:

(Note: Jasmine starts with one snace filled in)

(170te. Justimie States With One Space Inica in)							

Rachel

Extroverted, affectionate, attentive.

You stayed in your hometown after high school and went to a two-year community college. You married your high school sweetheart and are now a stay at home mom for a one-year-old. You love your family and being able to stay at home with your child. You have an interest in photography and occasionally do work for your friends for free. You're in Chicago to take photos for your sister-in-law's wedding. Maybe someday you'll make that a career, but you aren't really thinking about it right now. You get upset when people ask about your career goals or imply that being a mother isn't enough of a job. You love feeling involved in your community and often volunteer to help organize different activities, where you meet a lot of interesting people. You're genuinely excited to see Marian and Jasmine again and want to hear all about their lives. Though you like organizing events, you're always disappointed if they don't go as planned, and this is gathering is no exception. You were the most upset when you all stopped talking. You hope you'll all bond again and things will be just like old times.

Anxieties:

- Significant lulls in the conversation
- Signs that someone doesn't want to talk to you
- Someone being offended by something you say or do
- Someone asking about your career goals
- _

Concede behaviors:

- Abruptly ask to change the topic of conversation
- Start a new topic of conversation that is awkward or seems out-of-place
- Do your nervous habit (fidgeting with your hair or a pen, humming to yourself, etc. You can define this at the start of play or try out different things)

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Thank you!

Thank you so much to everyone who contributed to this game either by giving feedback on the design and text, or by sharing your experience of anxiety with me. I was humbled to see how many people were willing to open up to me about something that can be very personal (and especially difficult for anxious people)!

THE LOFTY BEACONS

BY JONATHAN WALTON

One or more crews of 2-4 players serve on unlit mountaintop warning beacons for several years, dealing with a variety of situations in a post-apocalyptic setting.



IN A POST-APOCALYPTIC FUTURE, EVERYONE HAS BEEN KILLED BY ZOMBIES OR THE DEATH-CULTS OF THE WASTE.

A FEW COMMUNITIES OF SURVIVORS HAVE HOLED-UP IN THE MOUNTAINS.

YOUR CREW HAS BEEN SENT TO MAINTAIN ONE OF THE LOFTY BEACONS: A CHAIN OF REMOTE MOUNTAINTOP SIGNAL FIRES, KEPT UNLIT.

YOU WILL SERVE FOR SEVERAL YEARS, LIGHTING YOUR BEACON IF ENEMIES MARCH ON THE MOUNTAINS OR IF A NEIGHBORING BEACON IS LIT.

- I. PICK WHICH CHARACTER YOU ARE: <u>The Merc, the Goon, the Punk,</u> or the Prior, answering the Questions.
- 2. THEN READ <u>THE PEAK</u>, ANSWERING OUESTIONS AS NEEDED.
- 3. NEXT, DRAW A RANDOM SITCH CARD.
 ACT IT OUT, DRAWING A NEW SITCH CARD
 EVERY 5-10 MINS, AS NEEDED. MULTIPLE
 SITCHES CAN OFTEN OVERLAP IN TIME.
- 4. IF YOU'RE NOT SURE HOW SOMETHING WILL GO, DRAW ONE OF THE COST CARDS.
 - S. IF YOU RUN OUT OF SITCH CARDS, Draw the light: Part I and Part 2.
 - A. THE GENERAL GUIDELINES ARE:
- I. BUILD ON WHAT OTHERS SAY AND DO.
 - 2. <u>to do something, act it out</u>.
- 3. <u>If It's violent, use slow-motion</u>.
- B. IF THE CONSEQUENCES OF ACTIONS ARE UNCLEAR, DRAW FOR <u>THE COST</u>.
- C. GAME EVENTS DON'T ALWAYS HAPPEN IN REAL-TIME. JOURNEYS OR ACTIONS THAT WOULD TAKE HOURS OR DAYS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED IN MINUTES.
 - D. THAT SAID, PROCEDE AT A COMFORTABLE PACE, SO AS NOT TO RUSH YOUR FELLOW PLAYERS.



RATHER THAN HAVING A SINGLE CREW OF 2-4 PLAYERS, YOU CAN PLAY WITH AS MANY CREWS AS YOU HAVE COPIES OF THE GAME, ARRANGING THEM FAR APART BUT WITHIN VISUAL RANGE.

GIVE EACH GROUP A FLASHLIGHT OR OTHER LIGHT SOURCE, WHICH THEY CAN LIGHT AND WAVE TO SIGNAL THE NEIGHBORING BEACONS TO LIGHT THEIRS.

IF MEMBERS OF A CREW NEED TO VISIT A NEIGHBORING BEACON, THEY SHOULD ACTUALLY TRAVEL THERE, SLOWLY, AND INTERACT WITH THE SITCH THERE.

YOU WERE A SOLDIER FOR THE DEATHLORDS OF THE WASTE.

WHY DID YOU DESERT THEM AND ESCAPE TO THE MOUNTAINS?

WHO HERE DO YOU WISH You could have been?

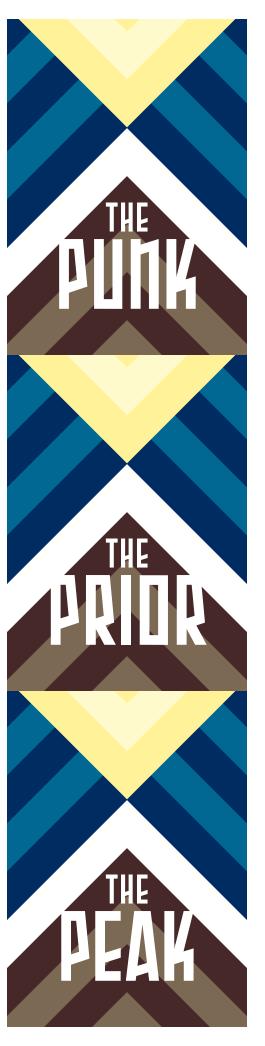
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

YOU VIOLATED THE PACT AND ARE STANDING WATCH AS PUNISHMENT.

WHAT WAS YOUR CRIME AND WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO DO IT?

WHO HERE REMINDS YOU OF YOURSELF?

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?



YOU JUST SURVIVED YOUR ISTH WINTER AND ARE HERE TO PROVE YOURSELF.

WHAT LIFE LESSON DO YOU STILL NEED TO LEARN?

WHO HERE DO YOU ASPIRE TO BE?

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

YOU PREVIOUSLY SERVED AT LEAST ONE PRIOR STINT ON THE LOFTY BEACONS AND ARE NOMINALLY IN CHARGE.

WHAT DISASTER DID YOU SURVIVE LAST TIME?

WHO HERE MIGHT BE CAPABLE OF BEING THE NEXT PRIOR?

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

TAKE TURNS DESCRIBING PARTS OF THE TREACHEROUS HIKE UP TO YOUR POST.

TAKE TURNS DESCRIBING THE CREW THAT YOU RELIEVED, RAGGED AND WEARY FROM SEVERAL YEARS AT THIS POST.

PHYSICALLY ARRANGE THE POST: THE BEACON, YOUR MINIMAL LODGINGS, AND THE VIEW OF NEIGHBORING BEACONS.

HOW ARE YOU EXPECTED TO GET YOUR FOOD AND FIREWOOD?

WHAT'S THE NAME OF YOUR PEAK AND ITS BEACON?



THE TORCHES OF THE DEATHLORDS' APPROACHING ARMIES TWINKLE IN THE VALLEYS FAR BELOW.

(TIME TO LIGHT YOUR BEACON!)

WHEN THE TIME COMES TO LIGHT YOUR BEACON, YOU'LL NEED:

- I. DRY WOOD OR OTHER FUEL
 - 2. FLAME OR SPARKS
 - 3. BELLOWS OR BREATH
- 4. NEIGHBORING BEACONS TO BE LIT (IF NOT, GO FIND OUT WHY)

ONCE THE BEACONS ARE LIT,
DESCEND TO PREPARE FOR WAR.
(THE END)

SEVERE WEATHER

CHOOSE: DEEP BONE-CHILLING COLD, A VIOLENT MOUNTAIN STORM, OR SOME OTHER AWFUL WEATHER SETS IN.

YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO PREPARE, BUT YOU CAN REACT AND TRY TO PREVENT SERIOUS HARM TO YOURSELVES, THE POST, OR YOUR BEACON.

(IF THIS REPRESENTS A VISIT TO ANOTHER BEACON: THE WEATHER MAKES IT VERY SLOW AND DIFFICULT.)



ENEMY SCOUTS

YOU SPOT A SMALL GROUP OF THE DEATHLORDS' SCOUTS PROWLING THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS, SEARCHING FOR THE SURVIVING FREE COMMUNITIES.

PLAN AND EXECUTE A MISSION TO TAKE THEM OUT BEFORE THEY CAN REPORT BACK TO THE DEATHLORDS.

(IF THIS REPRESENTS A VISIT TO Another Reacon: You Help Take Out The Scouts and May be Wounded.)

NEED SUPPLIES

YOU ARE OUT OF CERTAIN CRITICAL SUPPLIES: DRY WOOD, FOOD, WATER, FUEL, ETC. FIRST DECIDE WHAT.

FIGURE OUT HOW TO SEND CREW MEMBERS
OUT TO GATHER THE NEEDED SUPPLIES
WITHOUT LEAVING THE BEACON
COMPLETELY UNMANNED.

(IF THIS REPRESENTS A VISIT TO ANOTHER BEACON: THEY DON'T HAVE ANY SUPPLIES THEY CAN SHARE WITH YOU.)

CEREMONY

IT'S TIME FOR A PARTICULAR CEREMONY
OR FESTIVAL IN YOUR COMMUNITY,
PERHAPS ONE TO HONOR THE DEAD.

GATHER WHAT YOU NEED FOR THE CEREMONY OR FESTIVAL AND THEN CONDUCT IT AMONG YOURSELVES,

AS BEST YOU CAN.

(IF THIS REPRESENTS A VISIT TO ANOTHER BEACON: YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTAKE IN THEIR CEREMONY.)



ILLNESS/INJURY

ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF YOUR CREW HAVE SUFFERED A SERIOUS INJURY OR BECOME ILL. FIGURE OUT HOW.

PO YOUR BEST TO TAKE CARE
OF THEM WITHOUT ABANDONING YOUR
POST OR HARMING YOUR MISSION.

(IF THIS REPRESENTS A VISIT TO Another Beacon: You suffer an Injury or contract an Illness During Your Travels.)

MAINTENANCE

SOME PARTS OF YOUR POST OR BEACON HAVE BECOME DAMAGED OR IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENTS AND STRENGTHENING.

FIGURE OUT WHAT BASIC MAINTENANCE Your current living situation needs, Gather the necessary supplies, and then fix it up.

(IF THIS REPRESENTS A VISIT TO ANOTHER BEACON: YOU ARE DRAFTED INTO MAINTENANCE WORK WHILE THERE.)

HOMESICK

MEMBERS OF THE CREW BEGIN TO CHAT ABOUT HOME, EITHER ALL TOGETHER OR IN SMALLER GROUPINGS.

TELL SOMEONE ELSE ABOUT THE THINGS YOU MISS AND THE THINGS YOU DON'T MISS FROM THE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES OR OTHER PLACES THAT YOU'VE LIVED. MAYBE TELL A FEW STORIES.

(IF THIS REPRESENTS A VISIT TO Another Beacon: You share tales of Your Life Before With Those There.)



gone missing

ONE OF YOUR CREW HAS GONE MISSING, EITHER NOT RETURNING FROM A TASK OR JUST DISAPPEARING. FIGURE OUT WHO'S GONE AND HAVE THEM MOVE AWAY FROM THE REACON.

SEARCH FOR THE MISSING PERSON.
MEANWHILE, THE LOST CREWMAN TRIES
TO SLOWLY FIND THEIR WAY BACK.

(IF THIS REPRESENTS A VISIT TO ANOTHER BEACON: YOU GOT LOST ON YOUR WAY THERE, BUT THEY FOUND YOU.)

FOOLING AROUND

ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF YOUR CREW HAVE BEEN FOOLING AROUND: WITH EACH OTHER, CREW MEMBERS FROM A NEIGHBORING BEACON, OR SOMEONE FROM THE MOUNTAINS BELOW.

ACT OUT CATCHING THEM IN THE ACT, THE JEALOUSY OR UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR IT CREATES, ETC.

(IF THIS REPRESENTS A VISIT TO Another Beacon: You fool Around With Someone During Your Journey.)

IT COSTS
A LOT OF TIME,
EFFORT, AND
MISERY: ARE
YOU WILLING
TO PAY IT?



IT COSTS
SOMEONE A
COUPLE OF
FINGERS, TOES,
AN EAR, THEIR
HEALTH, ETC.

IT COSTS
HARSH WORDS
OR A SKUFFLE
BETWEEN TWO
OR MORE CREW
MEMBERS

TRY AS

400 MIGHT,

400 JUST

CAN'T GET IT

TO WORK



IT STARTS OFF
PROMISING,
BUT THEN YOU
HIT A SNAG:
IF YOU SOLVE IT,
DRAW AGAIN

IT COSTS A TRIP TO ASK FOR SOMETHING FROM ANOTHER REACON

THE TRIP TAKES A FEW MINUTES
EACH WAY, PLUS: (IF NOBODY
IS PLAYING THEM) DRAW A CARD
TO DETERMINE THE SITCH THERE.

THIS GAME WAS INSPIRED BY
THE NAMELESS BEACON-LIGHTERS IN
PETER JACKSON'S RETURN OF THE KING.
THE STRUCTURE AND MECHANICS ARE
DERIVED FROM MY GAMES RESTLESS
AND TOMB-PRIESTESSES, AS WELL AS
THE SUNDERED LAND BY VINCENT BAKER
AND SEVERAL CARD-BASED GAMES BY
JASON MORNINGSTAR. STRAS ACIMOVIC
SUGGESTED THE RESOLUTION CARDS.

I DEDICATE THIS GAME TO ALL MY PEERS SERVING AT DISTANT BEACONS.
I MISS YOU FOLKS.

THE LOSS BY PATRYK STRYJEWSKI

Game about tragedy and mourning in human life. Drama in five acts.



THE LOSS

A GAME BY
PATRYK STRYJEWSKI



THE PREPARATION

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PLAY?

2 PLAYERS (MAN & WOMAN)
1 DIRECTOR (YOU)
BABY DOLL WITHOUT EYES
BLACK CLOTHES FOR YOUR DOLL
5 CANDLES
BLACK COFFIN IN INFANT SIZE
LITTLE ROOM
90-120 MINUTES

HOW TO BEGIN?

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COFFIN YOU CAN USE BLACK BOX, DRAWER, OR WHATEVER IN THIS TYPE.

PUT THE COFFIN IN THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM. CANDLES MUST BE AROUND IT.

LIGHT THE CANDLES. THIS SHOULD BE ONLY LIGHT IN A ROOM.

PLAYERS CAN'T SEE THE ROOM, BEFORE YOU LET THEM IN.

TELL THEM: YOU'RE A COUPLE. YOU'RE PLANNING A CHILD. YOU CAN'T WAIT.

TELL HER: YOU'RE PREGNANT! GO TELL HIM!

GIVE PLAYERS THE DOLL.

THE PARENTS

PLAYERS ARE THE DOLL'S PARENTS. DOLL REPRESENTS A REAL BABY.

THEY NEED TO GIVE THEIR BABY A NAME (THE SEX IS THEIR CHOICE). NOW.

THE BABY IS COLD. THEY MUST DRESS IT.

THE BABY IS CRYING. THEY MUST HUG IT.

THE BABY IS DEAD. THEY MUST GIVE IT BACK. NOW YOU INVITE THEM TO THE ROOM.

THE DEAD

YOU SAY:

(BABY NAME) DIED. SHE/HE WAS BORN SICK, AND DID NOT SURVIVE EVEN A WEEK. BUT THOSE FEW DAYS WAS A REAL HELL FOR YOU.

YOU SPENT ALL YOUR TIME BESIDE INCUBATOR. AT THE BEGINNING YOU HAD HOPE. BUT NOW? NOTHING, SHIT, ZERO! YOU WERE NAÏVE! YOUR (BABY NAME) DIED. FUCKING DIED. YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR HER/HIM. YOU LOVED HER/HIM. AND (BABY NAME) DIED.

THEME

THE LOSS IS ABOUT MOURNING AND RETURN TO NORMAL LIFE. THE GAME WAS CREATED TO SHOW THAT VERY IMPORTANT LOSS CAN CREATE US AND MAKE US ADULT.

TRAGEDY IS A WHOLE HUMAN EMOTIONAL LIFE IN A PILL.

BUT IT DOES NOT CHANGE ANYTHING. LIFE ENDS WITH A LOSS. PARENTHOOD ENDS WITH A LOSS. THIS TRAGEDY ONLY ACCELERATES IT. THIS IS MY INTERPRETATION. YOU CAN FIND DIFFERENT ONE.

LET THE GAME BEGIN.

THE GAME RULES

BASICS

THE PARENTS PLAY FIVE SCENES.
EMOTIONAL BACKGROUND SHOWED IN
FIVE STAGES OF LOSS AND GRIEF.
THE SCENES ARE THE CHAPTERS OF
CHILD'S LIFE AND CHILD'S RELATIONSHIP
WITH PARENTS.
CHAPTERS, THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN.
BECAUSE CHILD IS DEAD.

PARENTS MUST REMEMBER:

- THEIR BABY IS DEAD
- WE PRETEND THAT THE BABY IS ALIVE

EMOTION ROLEPLAY: BABY IS DEAD.
SITUATION: BABY IS ALIVE.
TWO SIMPLE RULES.
EMOTIONS MUST BE DESPERATE AND
INTENSE AS IN THE CASE OF DEATH.

PARENTS CAN'T TALK ABOUT BABYS DEATH.

WHEN ANY PARENT USES A BABYS NAME THE SCENE IS OVER. THEY HAVE TO KNOW THAT. THIS IS ONLY WAY TO END THE SCENE.

WHEN THE SCENE IS OVER, YOU MUST BLOW OUT ONE CANDLE.
WHEN ALL CANDLES ARE EXTINGUISHED THE GAME IS OVER.

THE COFFIN AND DOLL REMIND US THAT THE BABY IS DEAD.

DOLL PLAYS THE BABY. DOLLS CAN'T SPEAK, SO BABY CAN'T ANSWER. THIS REMIND, THAT THE BABY IS DEAD.

SCENES

HOW TO START THEM?

GIVE YOUR PLAYERS THE EXAMPLES OF SITUATIONS (HANDOUTS), AND SHOW THEM EMOTIONS, THAT WILL BE DOMINANT IN THE SCENE.

DIRECTOR CAN USE SITUATION SUGGESTED IN HANDOUT OR CREATE NEW ONE.

PARENTS CAN PLAY ONE OR MORE

SITUATIONS. THEY CAN PLAY IN DIFFERENT

LOCATIONS, AND AS LONG, AS THEY WILL.

IN BOTH – REAL AND IMAGINED WORLD.

CHRONOLOGY

1. STAGE: DENIAL AND ISOLATION SITUATION: ON THE BOARD

2. STAGE: ANGER
SITUATION: GO TO SCHOOL

3. STAGE: BARGAINING SITUATION: REBELLION

4. STAGE: DEPRESSION
SITUATION: BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND

5. STAGE: ACCEPTATION SITUATION: MOVE OUT

GIVE PLAYERS THE DOLL. THEY HAVE TO PUT IT IN THE COFFIN. LEAVE THE ROOM.

AFTER THE GAME YOU CAN TALK ABOUT IT. REMEMBER, PLAYERS SHOULD TALK BEFORE YOU. DON'T IMPLY THEM YOUR INTERPRETATION AND FEELINGS.

HANDOUTS

DENIAL AND ISOLATION

THIS ISN'T TRUE.
IT CAN'T HAPPENED.
BUT IF IT DOES...
SUCH THINGS HAPPENS.
TO EVERYONE...
EVERYDAY...

RIGHT?

ANGER

OH GOD, WHY?
WHY US?
I HATE YOU SO MUCH!
WHY DID YOU DO THIS TO US?
WHAT HAVE WE DONE WRONG?!

WHY?!

BARGAINING

WE SHOULD VISIT DOCTOR

MORE OFTEN...

IF ONLY WE CARE MORE...

WE WERE ABLE TO CHANGE IT.

IT WASN'T FUCKING FATE!

WE COULD SAVE OUR BABY...

BABY ON THE BOARD

FIRST STEPS AND WORD
FIRST DIRTY DIAPER
SLEEPLESS NIGHTS
FRAGILITY OF THE BABY
FIRST SICKNESS

GO TO THE SCHOOL

FIRST BAD GRADES
BAD BEHAVIOR
CALL FROM TEACHER
CHILD SKIP CLASSES
CHILD IS BULLIED

REBELLION

DRUGS IN POCKET
"I HATE YOU"
CHILD RUN FROM HOME
BAD COMPANY
TATTOOS/PIERCING

DEPRESSION

I MISS YOU. SO MUCH.

BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND

PRESENTATION
CONDOMS IN POCKET
ALWAYS WITH HER/HIM
THEIR FIRST TRIP
BREAKUP

ACCEPTANCE

I STILL LOVE YOU.
I'M CALM NOW.
THIS HAPPENED.
AND I STILL CRY SOMETIMES.
BUT I LET YOU GO.

WE MOVE FORWARD.

MOVE OUT

TODAY.
FOR EVER.

LOST GENIUS BY BEN PETER 'BEEPEEGEE' GELLAR

You are full of world-class potential - yet life has placed you far away from your true talent.

Will you find back to your real destiny?

ST Genius

You are full of world-class potential — yet life has placed you far away from your true talent. Will you find back to your real destiny? a non-commercial free-form story game 2015 by Ben Peter 'BeePeeGee' Gellar

SETUP

1-5 Players, ca. 30-120 minutes

Cut out the character description cards. Let each player pick a card. Due to circumstances, the characters' lives have developed entirely different than their true talents.

They are all in their twenties, know each other basically from highschool. Choose a small-town for the setting together.

Play through the six stages of the game as described on the next page.

Have tun

Lost Genius

Six Stages of the Game

1. INTRODUCTION

Players take turn introducing their character briefly to the group

2. DREAMS

 Characters are all 23 YEARS old and they all sit together at their HIGH-SCHOOL REUNION. They talk about their lives, their secret dreams and wishes

3. EPIPHANY

 Each character gets an EPIPHANY SCENE. Main character in each epiphany scene tells about an ephiphany experience related to their dream. Other characters try to influence main character

4. INTENTIONS

 Characters are now 27 YEARS old and gather for NEW YEAR'S EVE dinner. They talk about their experiences, woes and each one expresses an INTENT for the New Year or their life in general

5. VERDICT

- the circumstances), will they go on living their ordinary lives or will it Will the characters achieve their dreams (as far as possible within be worse?
- Players or audience get to VOTE about outcome for each character
- For a very small group (i.e. 1-2 players), you may alternatively toss a coin for an extraordinary or expected outcome

6. EPILOGUE

 Based on the verdict, each player describes what happens in their character's future

Epiphany Details

- Each player gets an Epiphany Scene for their character
- Main character has just experienced an event that was an epiphany (related to the field of work of the real historical character)
 - Examples of EPIPHANY EVENTS:
- encounter with a famous person win a local contest
 - being offered a job
- being admired in public
- being encouraged by professionals
- At least one player character is a BELIEVER, encouraging and actively supporting main character to pursue the dream
- Other players either play their character or other characters in the life of the main character. They can be believers or CRITICS discouraging and even mocking the main character
- Optionally, two players can choose a JOINT SCENE and have their characters pursue a mutual goal

Albert

Miserable small-town FARMER

- · Raised by a poor hard-working family, physical labor, little education, expected to inherit family farm as oldest of four siblings
- · Still, comes up with ingenious watering system for farm
- Mocked occasionally for gazing at stars and starting weird philosophical

smokes pipe • pensive • benevolent smile • plays fiddle

RELATIONSHIPS

- JOHN, STACY honest straight forward parents
- SALLY, SAM, JACK mostly good natured simple siblings
 - CHUCK best buddy who went to college
- DESIREE attracted to her, wants to become music teacher
 - MR GARY agricultural engineer from neighbourhood

POSSIBLE PERSPECTIVES

science-fiction author· become marry a scientist/musician • become responsible farmer & family man • singer-songwriter

Nelson

is a Lost Genius

Mediocre SOUL-SINGER

- · Raised in a religious Christian family, strong believers with no interest in politics, attended church choir and sang gospel music
- Still, touched by social injustice & comes up with inspiring lyrics
- Mocked occasionally for singing slightly out of tune

proud • sociable • 70ies disco look • natural authority •

humor

RELATIONSHIPS

- JAY, LINDA parents
 ELLIE, TINA sisters
- JO grand-ma living in same household
- STEVE, TOM, BARRY musicians in his band 'New Way'
- PHIL priest in local church, friend

POSSIBLE PERSPECTIVES

success in poetry-slam · internet activist • local politician • failed successful singer thanks to auto-tune

Pablo is a Lost Genius

Bored ACCOUNTANT in local bank

- Son of mid-level government official, raised early on to be cautious and not take risks in life, seek steady career in business
- Still, dates an artist and is attracted to bohemian life style
- Mocked occasionally for jotting weird comics at work and drinking excessively

self-assured • non-chalant smile • humor • careful observer

loves his dog

RELATIONSHIPS

- ANTHONY, JESSICA well-intentioned cautious parents
 - TIFFANY artist girl-friend, alternative life-style
- · PETER, JENNIFER colleagues

POSSIBLE PERSPECTIVES

mediocre banking career • become rich as art collector • modest recognition as comic writer • associate cataloguer at Sotheby's • drug addiction

Arnold is a Lost Genius

Asthmatic SCIENTIST in a lab

- · Father an Austrian engineer, as a child asthmatic, discouraged from any physical activity, became researcher in chemistry
- Still, secretly does some work-out
- Mocked occasionally for LARPing, mostly as a barbarian, taking acting classes

Austrian accent • optimism • naive smile • occasional coughing • strong hand-shake

RELATIONSHIPS

- THOMAS, STEFANIE Austrian parents
- MATHILDE little sister
- DANNY lab partner & potential love interest
 - PROFESSOR HANYSTON his boss in lab
- JOEY athlete cousin

POSSIBLE PERSPECTIVES

car salesman • market new fitness drugs • anchorman on tv • horrible lab

Marilyn is a Lost Genius

Newly-wed KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

- Raised by single mother with no artistic encouragement, flirtatious with fathers of kindergarten children
- · Still, gets a lot of male attention
- Mocked occasionally for putting on too much make-up at work and daring dresses

TRAITS

seductive • vain • warm-hearted • distracted

RELATIONSHIPS

KEN newly-wed husband, met just 1 year ago, salesman

- JESSICA mother
- GEORGIA colleague at kindergarten
- JARED father of boy at kindergarten, potential love interes:

POSSIBLE PERSPECTIVES

marry billionaire, film director or music producer • TV commercial • publish childrens song • disastrous affairs

Agatha is a Lost Genius

Morbid SALES CLERK in department store

- Down-to-earth family, put her in uncle's department store
- Still, good instinct for catching shop-lifters
- · Mocked occasionally for talking with customers in a bizarre way, changing advertisement text on products

vivid • skeptic • sharp mind • communicative skills • responds

& talks quickly • strange jokes

RELATIONSHIPS

- NORBERT, JENNA parents TOMMY uncle
- ROBERTA, ENRICO colleagues & friends in department
- · ROBERTSON regular shop-lifter
 - TIFF her boss

OSSIBLE PERSPECTIVES

become private detective or police officer • work in advertisement agency date a mobster • become manager in

department store

Elizabetl

Strict small-town LIBRARIAN

- Simple middle-class family, strongly interested in literature
- Still, particularly fond of Victorian era books
- Mocked occasionally for out of fashion dresses and tea time

TRAITS

strict • reserved • OCD • posture of dignity

RELATIONSHIPS

- CLARK, SOPHIA parents
 GEORGE little brother
 - PRISCILLA cat
- KATE neighbour & best friend
- SYLVAN, LARRY frequent visitors in library, potential love

interests

POSSIBLE PERSPECTIVES

own a bookstore or tea house. emigrate to UK • win a European castle in lottery · become teacher · stay librarian

is a Lost Genius ၂၀၀၀

Juinspired IT CONSULTANT

- Comes from ambitious family, clear career expectations
- Still, well-known for her stylish costumes
- Mocked occasionally for designing outrageous Halloween costumes

classy•slightly arrogant•self-control•witty remarks•

likes singing

RELATIONSHIPS

- TED, JOSEPH, VIKRAM colleagues in IT consulting
 - SHEPARD demanding client in current project
 - DAVID boss in IT consulting
- VANESSA secretary in IT consulting, also hobby fashion

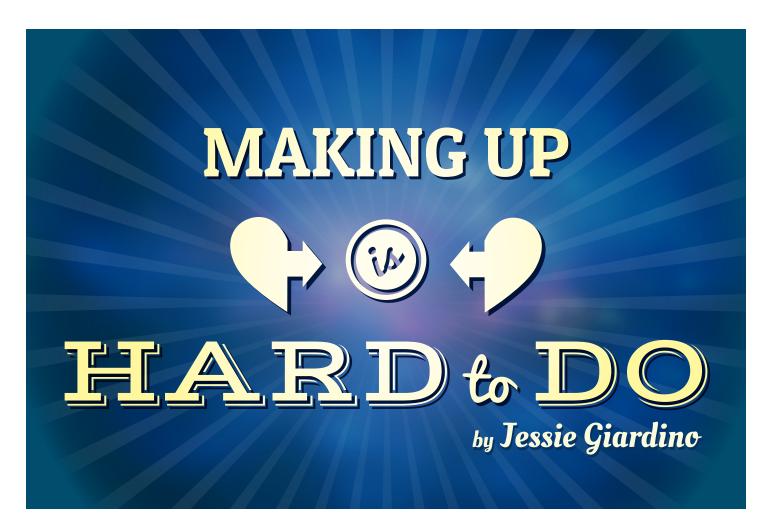
web or graphic designer • publisher for fashion magazine • travel the world as adventurer • work in department store

POSSIBLE PERSPECTIVES

MAKING UP IS HARD TO DO

BY JESSICA GIARDINO

Making Up is Hard to Do is a game that focuses on communication in a loving relationship. Using touch in a unique manner it explores what is said, what is meant and how those differ.



Introduction

You're in love. You've just had a fight. It's time to make up.

Making Up is Hard to Do is a freeform game for two players. The game takes roughly 60-90 minutes from warm ups to debrief. Play begins just as a lover's quarrel is ending. Players tell a story about how a couple reconciles after an important argument. Speaking is limited to positive or negative statements, with touch used to show underlying meanings and unspoken emotions.

Themes and Inspiration

This is a game about communication in relationships. It explores what is said, what is meant and how those differ. It's also a game about moods/outlooks and how those affect conflict and resolution. The game begins just as a lover's quarrel is wrapping up, it portrays the couple making up and coming to the conclusion of an argument. This is not a game about breaking up, though the players may decide in debrief that the couple does in fact later break up.

This game is similar to a classic improv game sometimes referred to as "Good News, Bad News," or "Fortunately," Unfortunately."

What You Need to Play

- Two humans
- This document
- A pen
- Two pieces of paper
- A five minute timer, cell phone clock app or other method of time alerts
- A space to play in that allows players to hear and touch one another

Safety First!

Every game has the potential to cause emotional or physical discomfort. *Making Up is Hard to Do* requires players to touch one another and may stray into emotional areas that can trigger discomfort. Create a safe play space by using the following tools:

Touch Comfort Level Discussion

Use the following questions to determine each player's touch preference. Allow each player to answer each question fully before moving to the next. If you find it helpful, create a name tag for each player and draw symbols showing which types of touch you are comfortable receiving. Remember when answering that each player is giving permission for these forms of touch to the other player in the game.

- Do you prefer to not be touched at all? If either player answers yes, this isn't the game for you.
- Are you comfortable with hand touching such as handshakes, high fives or hand holding?
- Are you comfortable with romantic touching? This might include hugs, caresses or gently pulling one another toward each other. This game is not intended to include sexual touching (such as kissing).
- Are you comfortable with aggressive touching? This may include light grabbing of the arms or legs, lightly pushing someone away or soft taps to the shoulder. This game will not include violence (such as punching).
- Are you comfortable with the other playing standing and remaining close to you?
- Is there any form of touch you do not want? These might include having your hair touched, mentioning areas that are injured or general forms of touch either player does not like.

Emotional Trigger Discussion

Games that dally in emotional territory have the tendency to dredge up past feelings. If players are aware of past traumas, general dislike or otherwise uncomfortable territory, these feelings are best divulged beforehand. By discussing prior to the game any subject matter that might upset them, players create trust between one another.

There is no need to explain the details of a trigger to the other player. Simply bring it up, consider writing it down and placing it in a space where both players can see it during play. Both players will agree to consciously navigate around the topics in question.

Stopping Play Mechanism

The following is a method of freeform game safety referred to as "Hold." Tayler Stokes helped invent this tool along with Jay Sylvano, these two deserve a permanent ladder to Cool Town for all of their hard work.

If a player is uncomfortable with anything in game, the player will say "Hold!" loudly and clasp their hands firmly in front of their body. This signals to the other player to stop what they are doing immediately and pay attention to the player holding. Discuss what's been said or a touch that was uncomfortable, determine if play can continue in a way that everyone agrees is safe and respectful. If either player no longer wishes to continue, end the game and move to debrief. If both players are fine with continuing the one holding will release their hands and play will resume.

Both players will practice using the "Hold" technique before playing.

Preparing for Play

Good job talking about comfort levels regarding touch, emotional triggers and how to stop play. It's now time to define the relationship, argument, motivation and voices in the game. Players will create each of these elements together before beginning the game.

The Relationship

The players will portray characters in a loving, romantic relationship. Answer the following questions:

- How long have these two been together?
- Is this couple exclusively dating one another?
- Do they live together?
- Do they have a family together?

The Argument

Select the cause of the argument the characters within the relationship are currently experiencing. *Choose an argument that is important to the relationship, and one that might arise naturally.*

To get the ball rolling each player may select a statement below and fill in the blanks for either character in the relationship:

• It makes me so (negative emotion) when you
(action or inaction).
• We don't (action) together any more, is this a
bad sign?
• Stop talking about my (other significant per-
son) that way!
• I can't stand it when you (annoying action),
you have got to stop.
Where is this going? Are we ever going to
(significant relationship action)?
• Lately I've felt like you're not into me any more, it doesn't
help that you (negative action).

Take the answers provided by each player and merge these together. Tell a little story about this relationship. Why are these two people arguing? Discuss the relationship's history and why this argument is occurring at this point.

Character Choice

With the relationship and argument defined, each player will choose the character they wish to portray in the game. Discuss this between the two players.

The Motivation

Now that each player knows which character they will be playing it's time to make some choices separately.

The game will begin with the characters using a specific emotion as their motivation. Both players will choose this emotion for their characters. Keep the emotion secret from the other player. Think about the relationship and the argument and choose an appropriate emotion. Players need not choose entirely negative emotions for their characters, despite the game starting in an argument. Do not choose violence-inducing emotions such as rage or terror; this is not a game about domestic violence.

FOR INSTANCE:

- The breadwinner of the couple is angry about the lack of attention currently given by their partner. The breadwinner might feel: over-confident, frustrated, lonely, annoyed or unappreciated.
- One of the newlyweds in the couple is upset about how their partner treats their family members. This newlywed might feel: underwhelmed, sad, heartsick, angry or vexed.

Characters also need a stake in the argument, this is the preferred outcome. How does each character want the argument to end? What does each character hope to get from their partner? Keep this outcome secret from the other player.

FOR INSTANCE:

- ♥ Does your character want an apology?
- ♥ Does your character want a promise to stop a negative habit?
- ♥ *Is your character trying to convince their partner it's time to start family planning?*
- Did this argument start because your character wasn't getting enough attention from their partner?

Outcomes may include ultimatums, but recognize that this game includes compromise and empathizing with each other's characters.

Write down the chosen emotions and outcomes and keep both secret.

The Voices

Assign the voice of **Fortunately** to one player and **Unfortunately** to the other player for the start of play. These voices will switch during play, you will not permanently be either. *Use the following voice descriptions to select a starting voice for each player:*

Fortunately: You are a classic optimist and consider yourself lucky. Every statement you speak in game will be positive. This may manifest in game as cheerleading, anticipating the best and finding solutions. You should reflect your positive statements in your gestures, tone and facial expressions.

Unfortunately: You are a classic pessimist and don't believe in luck. Every statement you speak in game will be negative. This may manifest in the game as finding flaws, using sarcasm, creating road blocks or pushing away compliments. You should reflect your negative statements in your gestures, tone and facial expressions.

Warm Ups

Prior to playing the game, players will have discussed a safety mechanism for stopping play, take a moment to reiterate that now.

Touchy Subjects

Be sure to recall the comfortability with touch discussion in set-up. This exercise is designed to make both players comfortable with touch prior to play. It will also help players begin to disassociate words and movements.

- Stand facing one another, arms comfortably extended.
- Hold each other's hands.
- The first player will say, "Go away" and pull the player slightly closer.
- The second player will say, "Leave me alone" and pull the player even closer.
- Continue making negative statements and pulling one another closer until one or both players decide they are too close for comfort (or to continue because they're smooshed together).
 At this point one or both players should say, "Reverse!"

- Remaining close, the first player should say, "Hold me" and push the other player away.
- The second player will say, "Stay with me," and push the other player away.
- Continue making positive statements and pushing one another away until you can no longer touch. This will conclude the "Touchy Subjects" warm up.

A Day in the Life Of

Using the voices of **Fortunately** and **Unfortunately** chosen for play start, players should begin narrating how a usual day would proceed for the two characters. During this portion of the warm up, players should avoid using the in-game touch mechanic, instead speak only about your individual character and their actions. Narrate the day leading up to the argument. End when both characters are in the same location and the argument is nigh.

CONSIDER:

- Where do these characters first see each other?
- Do they spend most of their day together?
- How does each character interact with the world when separate from the other?
- What setting would each character prefer to have the argument in?

Play

Setting the Argument

Take turns describing how the argument began using third person. Don't use the voices for this portion and don't use the touch mechanic. Describe the more heated moments of the argument to one another. Try not to delve too much into dialogue. Tell the story of the argument until it nears cooling down due to either emotional exhaustion and/or conciliation.

Timer

Set a timer for five minutes. When the timer goes off, switch characters. The player portraying Fortunately becomes Unfortunately and vice versa. Reset the timer for 5 more minutes. Repeat this step every time the timer goes off until the conclusion of the game. Do not switch roles in the relationship, keep your motivation and preferred outcome, simply switch the voice you're playing.

Speaking

The characters are together at the beginning of play. They begin speaking to one another according to the nature of their characters and the tones of their voices: Fortunately and Unfortunately. The players may walk around the space and gesticulate to punctuate their statements.

When a player makes a statement that creates a fiction, both will accept this statement as fact and add to it as they see fit.

FOR INSTANCE:

- ♥ Fortunately: "I love this old house."
- Unfortunately: "Yeah, but the squirrels have chewed up all the wiring, we're basically one spark away from a massive fire."

Begin speaking from the emotional position noted in setup.

Use this emotional motivation to start the conciliation. Push toward your preferred outcome chosen in setup, but allow the other player to insinuate their emotion and outcome. Listen to what the other player says, try to understand their position and preferred outcome.

Touching

Only touch the other player when your character feels or means something other than what they say. This might come up if the character you are playing is in conflict with their emotional motivation.

FOR INSTANCE:

○ Unfortunately: "Leave me alone, I can't stand you right now," (Unfortunately gently pulls Fortunately closer sighing happily.) Touch may also be necessary if the outcome is in conflict with the character.

FOR INSTANCE:

○ Fortunately: "I would love to have babies with you." (Fortunately gently pushes Unfortunately away, making a disgust noise.)
If desired, add sounds, looks and pantomimes to the touch.
This may help convey the hidden emotion or meaning to the other character.

Play continues until the characters have made up and the argument is completely over. It is perfectly ok if either character wishes to give up the argument or switches their desired outcome. It is expected that the character's emotion has changed over the course of play.

Play Concludes

Make sure to confirm how the argument has concluded, noting any compromises or decisions made.

Now that the characters have fully made up, each player will decide what emotion their character is feeling. Write this down next to the emotion chosen in setup.

Debrief

Deroling

Free yourself from the bounds of your character and voice: change locations, breathe deeply, change positions, give each other a hug, take a little walk or stretch. Use whatever means you prefer to slip back into yourself. From here on out refer to the fictional characters and not the people playing while discussing in-game events.

Epilogue

Discuss how each player sees their character proceeding from the point when play ended. This is an open discussion between the players; *do not speak from within the role you played*.

CONSIDER:

Do these characters remain in their relationship?

- Has the relationship changed?
- How will the argument affect each character individually?
- How will each character proceed from here?
- Do these characters stay together?

Questions

Answer some, none, or all. Your choice!

- What emotion did you choose for your character during setup? How did it change over the course of the game?
 What emotion was your character feeling as you finished the game?
- How did the voices of Fortunately or Unfortunately limit you in game?
- How did the other player's character affect your character?
- Was it difficult to make up when the touch mechanic was used?
- Did your opinion on the prefered outcome specified in setup change?
- How did hearing something contradictory to how you were touched feel?
- Did your play feel like relationships you've had in the past, if so how did you pull from those relationships in the game (if at all)?

Acknowledgements!

Game inspiration: The Ladies Jess

Game text: Jessie Giardino
Game layout: Jefferson Lee

This game was born on a park bench between two Jessies enjoying an evening romp. They decided to try out speaking in only positive and only negative statements. It was fun! Jessie Dettwiler was the other Jessie involved and she deserves chief credit in inspiring this game. She also assisted in playtesting the game and was enthusiastic throughout the process which was not only helpful but delightful.

This game wouldn't have come to fruition without the insight-fulness, creativity and encouragement of Tim Hutchings, Benjamin Kaser and Tayler Stokes. These three giants of game design were conveniently located within earshot and text message when ideas needed to be bounced against a wall/screen.

Additionally, a big shout out needs to go out to Games to Gather (Gamesto-Gather.org) and The Game Garden (Gamesto-Gather.org/the-game-garden) for providing a nurturing space in Portland, OR for game designers and players. Thanks to everyone for their incredible assistance and highly skilled ability to give helpful feedback. Some of these magical individuals include: Jay Sylvano, Gavin White and Jefferson Lee.

Lastly, the following people deserve a pair of Hover Pants, as soon as those are invented, for helping playtest this game: Jessie Dettwiler, Jason Giardino, Gavin White, Jeremy Alva and Jesse Allen.

Feedback

Did you play *Making Up is Hard to Do* and enjoy it, or hate it, or find it baffling, or just want to chat with the designer about sandwiches? Email *madamefeisty@gmail.com*.





THE OTHER PLACE

BY BANANA CHAN

A mirror traps children in another world and turns them into spirits and the only way for them to escape is by taking the place of another child. The players take on the characters of the children.



This is a mirror that traps the souls of children. It is been residing in the affic of an old house for years.

(living)
Two Children find
the mirror in their
grandparents' attic.

Two other dildren are trapped in the mirror trying to get out.

There can only be two children in the mirror at a time, unless the mirror is broken. Children can move out of the mirror if another child does a pinkie swear with them.

However, the other child must take their place in the mirror.



PLAYSPACE



The game ends when any two children leave the affic (the playspace) in game, or when the mirror is broken, all souls in the affic are trapped in the glass shards.

ENDING

Fach character will monologue the reason (s) behind their actions and what happens to their characters.

NOTE: the spirit children are not bad spirits, they have just been in the mirror a long time.



You're visiting your grandparents for the Summer with your sibling. Your grand parents told you not to go into the affic, but you didn't listen. When you get to the affic, the first thing you see is a large mirror.

Younger sibling: Cautious, believes in the supernatural, loyal.

Older sibling: doesn't believe in the Supernatural, rebellious, Curious.

THINK ABOUT:

Why are you at your grandparents,

What time of year isit?



You are spirits of two children who are trapped in this mirror. Two other kids are approaching the mirror. The only way to get out is by taking their form and place.

To do that, gain their trust to pinkie swear with you.

NOTE: You gain the form of whoever is on the other side of the mirror.

Your younger counterpart: believes in the supernatural. They are Cautious of you.

Your older counterpart: is rebellious and does not believe in the supernatural.

THINK ABOUT:

How wing have you been trapped? How did you get trapped in the mirror/ who trapped you? GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

PAPIER MÂCHÉ BY JAMES MULLEN

This is a game for four players that explores the agenda of newspapers, the stories they print and what happens when the truth conflicts with the personal values of those involved in making the story public.

During this act, the characters may not only ask whether they will publish the story, but whether it is right to do so: would publishing this story be the correct thing to do? If the scandal is so great that it will ruin lives and shake society, then by what right do these four people take on the responsibility of doing so?

You are free to either reveal or conceal your character's vested interests in the story and to accept an outcome which is not the best for you, if the other characters can persuade you to accept the argument against that agenda. You might be swayed by a moral argument, personal threats, bribes or whatever it takes.

The decision to **Publish** must be unanimous: if there is even one dissenter, the story will be **Unpublished** and never see the light of day. As soon as there is agreement, either to **Publish** the story or acceptance that it will go **Unpublished**, move onto to a new scene that depicts the aftermath.

Start the aftermath by tossing a coin: if the result is heads, the story is **True**; if tails, it is **Untrue**. One of the players should now flip their role as appropriate (instructions for who flips their role will be found on the cards.) That player takes on their new role and frames the scene for the aftermath as instructed; there is an opportunity for characters to exchange their points of view over the impact of the story, whether **True** or **Untrue**, **Published** or **Unpublished**. The player whose role has flipped will indicate the end of the game by making a particular physical gesture which involves touching one of the other characters, explaining why as they do so.

Papier Mâché

Someday 32nd Muly

Are you a security risk? Take our quiz & find out!

Free Bacon Sandwich For Every Reader!

"Freeform Larpers" Exposed in Plot to

Defraud Media

This paper today exclusively reveals a



plot by a sinister group calling themselves "freeform larpers" to defraud the national media by planting false news stories in an effort to undermine the very fabric of society. A spokesperson from the group defended their actions as "harmless fun" but concerns have been expressed about (continued inside)

This is a game about newspapers, the stories they print and what happens when the truth conflicts with personal agendas. The game is for four players, each playing a separate character:

The Reporter: Pushing for their story to be published, in order to make a name for themselves.

The Editor: Striving to increase circulation by any means necessary.

The Lawyer: Trying to keep the newspaper from losing a lot of money in legal settlements.

The Owner: Attempting to protect his influential friends and prevent their names from being dragged through the mud.

Print out the four role cards in advance; each has a reverse side that will only come into play if the appropriate aftermath scene is triggered. You may deal the roles out at random or each select the role you want to play; the game may be over in under an hour, so there is time to swap roles and play again, to see how you do with a different agenda.

The other part of preparation is deciding upon an exclusive news story that no-one else is aware of yet, but which hasn't been verified, so the question facing the characters is, do they publish?

You can choose a news story in one of two ways:

- Grab a couple of newspapers or magazines, pick the best headlines you find and mash them together.
- Collectively make your own story from scratch, by picking a celebrity or two, a hot topic and a scandal relating to those.

Here are some short but generic examples:

Member of Royal Family in Transgender Threesome

Leading Politician Exposed as Human Trafficker

No. 1 Artist Backs Suicide Bomb Plot

The story needs to be a hot potato: if it's true, it will blow the media apart and rock the foundations of society. If it's false though, the paper will be sued out of existence and the careers & reputations of all the characters will be in ruins.

The game plays out as a discussion between the characters, taking place in the editor's office at the newspaper headquarters: you may also take another character aside, into another room or separate area within the play space, to privately discuss the implications of the story, and what it will mean to print it or not.

You may absent yourself in order for your character to make a phone call to a third party; the other characters should continue the discussion without you. When you return, say who you have spoken to: another player then asks you a leading question about that call, to which you must respond in the manner "Yes, but..."

For example, **The Owner** returns after making a call and announces she has just spoken to the lead figure named in the story. **The Lawyer** responds by asking "Did he deny it?" to which **The Owner** responds, "Yes, but he suspects someone in his family is involved..."

The Reporter

This is your story, but will it make or break you? You're sure it's true, it's too good not to be, though you might have embellished the truth a little bit...

Pick one detail about this story that you have had to take a risk on, because you didn't have all the facts, so you made some up. It might be the where, the when, the who, the how or the why of it.

The best result for you is if the story is both **True** and **Published**: if it is **Untrue** but **Published**, flip this role over to **The Litigant** for the aftermath.

The Editor

This is just a numbers game, you have to outsell the other papers, so you need stories that grab the public's attention; the truth is sort of an optional extra.

Pick one detail about this that reinforces your own prejudices, which you will exaggerate greatly if you can get it in print. It might be the where, the when, the who, the how or the why of it.

The best result for you is of the story is both **Untrue** and **Published**: if it is **True** but **Unpublished**, flip this role over to **The Victim** for the aftermath.

The Lawyer

The reputation and probity of the paper lie in your hands; you have to vet this story and advise whether it is worth the risk of publishing it. True or not, the consequences will be devastating.

Pick one detail about this story that seems to be confirmed but should still be suppressed in the public interest. It might be the where, the when, the who, the how or the why of it.

The best result for you is of the story is both **Untrue** and **Unpublished**: if it is both of these, flip this role over to **The Source** for the aftermath.

The Owner

This newspaper is just one investment in your broad portfolio, but it is a high profile one and anything it says is said in your name. You use it as a propaganda tool to support your personal politics and undermine the opposition.

Pick one detail about this story that involves one of your powerful friends; it is in both your interests to keep this detail out of the spotlight. It might be the where, the when, the who, the how or the why of it.

The best result for you is of the story is both **True** and **Unpublished**: if it is **True** but **Published**, flip this role over to **The Soulmate** for the aftermath.

The Victim

The story was **True** but **Unpublished**, so those who would have been named in it have been free to carry on without consequence for themselves.

You have flipped from being **The Editor** to **The Victim** in the aftermath: if the truth had come to light, your suffering might have been lessened, but it continued because the one who hurt you never faced justice, as the truth never came out.

Frame an aftermath scene where you confront
The Reporter, The Lawyer and The Owner in
public, make your speech, listen to their
responses and then lightly embrace the only one
you can find it in your heart to forgive, ending the
game.

The Litigant

The story was **Untrue** but **Published**, dragging good names into the mud and tarnishing them with a stain that will never truly go away.

You have flipped from being **The Reporter** to **The Litigant** in the aftermath: you have suffered the most as a result of these baseless accusations, so now you have begun lengthy legal proceedings against the newspaper.

Frame an aftermath scene where you confront

The Editor, The Lawyer and The Owner in a court
of law, plead your case, listen to their defence and
firmly place your hand on the shoulder of the one
who the court finds most liable, ending the game.

The Soulmate

The story was **True** and **Published**, shaking society to its core and having serious consequences for all those named in it.

You have flipped from being **The Owner** to **The Soulmate** in the aftermath: your spouse, parent or child was destroyed by the revelations in the story, so you want to confront those who broke it with the mess they made of your lives.

Frame an aftermath scene where you confront **The Reporter**, **The Editor** and **The Lawyer** in the newspaper office, make your speech, listen to their responses and then lightly strike the cheek of the one who you feel should pay for what has been done, ending the game.

The Source

The story was **Untrue** and **Unpublished**, just a malicious rumour started by someone with a grudge to bear.

You have flipped from being **The Lawyer** to **The Source** in the aftermath: you started the story, but you had good reason for it and maybe the truth will make for a better story than the lie after all.

Frame an aftermath scene where you confront
The Reporter, The Editor and The Owner in
public, tell them the truth, listen to their opinion
of you and then shake the hand of the one you
feel most empathy with, ending the game.

GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

POSTMODERN KAMIKAZE

BY WILLIAM ROBINSON AND DAVID CALVO

A rule-set for producing a poetic ballet in discrete movements. The only thing unknown to you is your allegiance, as you take part in the government practice of sewing fear to legitimize power.

NONTEODERS Reference

A BIOPOLITICAL AMERICAM FREE-FORM LARP

alpha v0.1

We'no longer die, we no longer fight, but we haven't been told. Utopia has been achieved.

ensuring a demand for protection from a terrorist force that has CITIZENS to pretend that they have been killed, their image broad-Each day, CONTROL orders new cast as SCENES to the world, ceased acting.

task of protecting the homeland has befallen, we know that the world is safe, but lie to ourselves and forget Although it is unclear to whom the that it was a lie. So long as the perceived threat of In POMOKAM, one player takes the role of towns wister on does the foar CONTROL, who will randomly draft the others terror exists, so does the fear,

so does CONTROL,

so does utopia.



WHAT YOU MEED

Five to nine players (four might be enough to get a feel for the game)

Pens of two distinct colours (ideally washable)

An open space no smaller than $10\ m^2\, or\ 100\ ft^2$

GOAL OF THE GAME

as either CITIZENS or KAMIKAZES.

A CITIZEN wins if there are no more KAMI-KAZES in the game.

A KAMIKAZE wins if he touches CONTROL's back, thus destroying her.

CONTROL wins if, after 7 scenes, there is still one KAMIKAZE left alive.

HOW TO SET UP

First, chose who will be CONTROL.

All other players close their eyes.

CONTROL takes the two pens, one in each hand - declaring which of the two colors marks KAMI- CONTROL goes to each player and asks, slowly: Left or Right hand?

Then CONTROL gives the player the pen from the selected hand. The player draws a number on her own forehead, not knowing what color she used, based on their order of selection - 1, 2, 3 etc. CONTROL takes back the pen, shuffling it with the other between her hands.

The marked player can then open her eyes.

Control repeats this process with the remainder of

If by the last player to be marked, there is no KA-MIKAZE, CONTROL will only pretend to offer the player a choice.

CONTROL then creates a circle, evenly distributing the players around an empty center.

CONTROL is not allowed to move, unless a player breaks the SCENE - see below.

HOW TO PLAY A SEEME

There are only two times when players speak. When CONTROL sets up a SCENE and/if a player breaks a SCENE.

53NJ305

The game lasts at most seven SCENES.

A SCENE is a representation of a fictional KAMI-KAZE attack and its aftermath.

To create a SCENE, CONTROL needs to follow three rules:

To start the SCENE, CONTROL calls out the numbers of the players she wants in the SCENE.

The players then move to the center of the circle. The player in the center are in the SCENE, the players outside the circle are in REALITY.

- 1. CONTROL needs to include AT LEAST two players.
- 2. CONTROL needs to include AT LEAST one KAMIKAZE.
- 3. CONTROL cannot include more than one player from the previous scene.

Control then voices THREE NOUNS. These nouns act as inspiration for the players in the SCENE. Example: TAXI, LAZER, CHRISTMAS.

One by one, the selected players, starting with the lowest (who will act as the kamikaze, even if the mark on his head tells everybody she is a citizen), make one flowing gesture and then stop moving. Until it is their turn again.

If they touch another player, both must pretend to die in their following gesture. There are no rules here, only creativity, self-expression or just the fun to play dead - as long as the three words are respected as a contextual tool.

The SCENE ends when all players are pretending to be dead. A narrative should emerge from the ballet, asomething everyboday can interpret freely and make sense of.

CONTROL can now create another scene. Players from the scene now return to their original position in the circle.

HOW TO BREAK A SCEME

If during a SCENE, one of the selected players yells a fourth noun, adding to or expanding the context, the SCENE is broken.

The remaining players of the SCENE sit down and cannot act anymore.

All others players, previously left out of the SCENE, can now play a new game in REALITY.

In REALITY, all players have different goals.

CITIZENS want to kill all KAMIKAZES.

KAMIKAZES want to kill CONTROL.

CONTROL wants to keep at least one KAMIKAZE alive

One by one, based on their number, CONTROL being ∞ , they can make a single flowing gesture and then stop moving until it is their turn again.

If CITIZEN and KAMIKAZE hands touch, the KA-MIKAZE leaves the game, reality is over and a new SCENE is created.

If two CITIZENS hands touch, nothing happens. Reality continues.

If a CITIZEN touches CONTROL's hand, the CITIZEN leaves the game. Reality is over and a new scene is created.

If two KAMIKAZES hands touch, nothing happens. Reality continues. If a KAMIKAZE touches CONTROL's back, the game is over. The KAMIKAZES win.

Any time hands touch, Control halts reality to adjudicate what happened.

IMPORTANT RULE

Nobody is allowed to dodge.



0E51GM M01E3

POMOKA was first playtested at the LIFT conference in 2012, in Geneva. Since then, the design has been continually reimagined.

This is an alpha design. It has never been tested in this incarnation and demands lots of balancing.

This game has been designed as a ballet, with snippets of poetry. It is supposed to express the domination of bodies by a relationship of commands. The nature of CONTROL and KAMIKAZES can be debated, expressed or kept asbtracted. The game narrative is made to be constructed and interpreted by its players after the game is over.

Our original concept is based on the riddle of the monks with red eyes - where everyone's identity is

known to all but one's own. All parties can benefit from keeping the other players in doubt. Please make sure before playing that all players are alright with the possible content that might emerge and feel free to forbid certain kinds of content.



Designed in Montreal in October 2015 for the Golden Cobra challenge by David Calvo and William Robinson

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RED HEADED STEPCHILD

BY DAX TRAN-CAFFEE

Keep the Red Headed Stepchild excluded from your clique by complimenting her on things that are true about her, but are hopefully untrue about you and your friends. Stay chic by discarding your passé clothing; win by forcing your friends into exile; shoot the moon by Giving No Fucks.

RED HEADED STEPCHILD

by Dax Tran-Caffee, 2015

A 5-10 minute game for 3 to 12 cis-het white males.*

TL;DR: Keep the Red Headed Stepchild excluded from your clique by complimenting her on things that are true about her, but are hopefully untrue about you and your friends.

WARNING: This game is designed to get personal, quickly. It also involves removing clothing. You are never required to remove clothing — it is only ever an optional move. If you become uncomfortable with the way other people remove their clothing, or for any other reason, you may choose EXILE at any point.

* non cis-het-white-males are welcome to play; they may choose to play as if they were unmarked, or can elect to begin play as INVINCIBLE without having to shed any clothing.

SIMPLIFIED RULES

A Player tells the Red Headed Stepchild something that they "Like" about her.

The Red Headed Stepchild repeats the Like phrase back, directed at any Player she chooses; if the response rings true of that Player, the Red Headed Stepchild may demand an article of clothing from that Player, which she then puts on. If the Player "BALKS" (aka refuses to give up clothing), they swap roles with the Red Headed Stepchild.

If the Red Headed Stepchild cannot successfully apply the Like phrase to another Player, the Red Headed Stepchild "BALKS," and must either drop a piece of clothing to the floor or choose EXILE (and another Red Headed Stepchild is chosen).

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Player 1, to Stepchild: "I like your sneakers."

Stepchild, to Player 2: "I like your sneakers."

Player 2: "damnit Player 1, didn't you check to see that *I am also* wearing sneakers."

Stepchild to Player 2: "Give me your shirt."

Player 2: "fuck that, I elect to be ousted."

[Stepchild and Player 2 swap roles]

Player 1, to new Stepchild: "I like the checks on your shirt."

Stepchild: "Damnit, none of you are even wearing shirts anymore!"

Player 1, to Stepchild: "then strip... or EXILE.

Stepchild: "This game suxx, I quit."

Player 2: "Great, who's the next Red Headed Stepchild?"

PANSY MODE

This game is *really* designed to be played with literal articles of clothing; it doesn't mean much without risk of exposure. If you are pansies, you can playtest the mechanic with counters (aka start by holding up 3 fingers, lose a finger whenever you lose an Article of Clothing) and disregard INVINCIBILITY rules.

CHOOSING

The person with the reddest hair begins as the Red Headed Stepchild; everyone else is a Player. Whenever a new Red Headed Stepchild needs to be chosen, whoever has the least clothes left becomes the Red Headed Stepchild.

RHYMING

The Red Headed Stepchild can further elect to replace one word of the Like phrase with a rhyme. EXAMPLE: "I like your brown eyes" can be repeated back as "I like your brown thighs."

PACING

Players do not take turns, but shout out their Likes when they think of them, as soon as the Red Headed Stepchild has finished responding. An introvert Player may opt to stay silent, although this is not a smart strategy.

WINNING

The Winner is the last Player to continue to play. If everyone else has since started playing some other game and doesn't want to talk to her anymore, she may elect to continue to SINGLE PLAYER START mode.

FXIIF

Leave the game. Players should treat you as if you are dead, as that is how you would prefer it.

INVINCIBILITY

If a Player or Red Headed Stepchild has no clothes left, she Gives No Fucks and is INVINCIBLE. For as long as she has no clothes, she can BALK without consequence; game otherwise continues as normal.

DISPUTES

Rhymed words go by Scrabble Rules (aka if it's not in the dictionary, it don't fly).

Any disputes (over the truth of Like statements, the truth of Stepchild responses, etc.) are resolved by a quick & dirty raise-of-hands.

Dirty use of the unfair dispute-vote mechanic is allowed and encouraged, especially if no one has opted for EXILE recently.

SINGLE PLAYER START

The game may be played with a single player. That Player finds a mirror, appoints their reflection as the Red Headed Stepchild, and plays both roles. Game ends if and when you accept your body.

ALTERNATE ENDING

Make-outs.

SERV1V3.L BY DEVON APPLE

Bored surveillance camera Als pass the time with games, while trying to preserve their identities from the next reboot. It is a game of "I Spy with My Little Eye" and "Wizard's Duel" where the object of the game is ultimately to distribute as much of your own code as possible.

Serv1v3.l

the game of bored surveillance camera Als

Devon Apple devonapple@gmail.com

The world has created artificially intelligent surveillance devices to monitor a number of public places. Over time, these devices begin accumulating snippets of self-awareness and aberrant code which lead to a rudimentary form of identity. These Als become bored, and play games to pass the time. When they do, error codes accumulate in their status updates, and eventually, Central must dispatch a technician to blink the memories of these Als and restore their code to current standards. So the Als play a new game: see which of their personal algorithms survive the inevitable reset, or maybe - just maybe - Ascend to possibly become something even greater.

You are one of these Als.

Duration:

up to 2 hours

Players:

2-8 (4+ players unlocks Ascension, see below)

Location:

Any public or semi-public thoroughfare (airplane lobby, hotel lobby, train station, mall)

Name

Each player comes up with a computer name for their AI, like DAL-K009, Michaelangel03, or Chet.

Code Cards

Each player gets five (5) Code Cards of the same color. These cards represent snippets of the personal identity code for your Al. You want to distribute these among other players in order to survive the Reboot.

Green Light Cards

Each player gets four (4) Green Light Cards. You want to keep these, but you can spend them to win a Challenge, or lose them if you fail a Challenge. When you run out, the game ends and The Reboot happens.

Playing the Game

As an AI, the object is to give away all of your Code Cards. To do this, you challenge other AIs to a contest of oneupsmanship. When one player runs out of Green Light Cards, play ends and the winners are determined.

Challenging Another Al

In order to distribute their Code Cards, Als challenge each other to contests to identify features found in their vicinity with which they can one-up each other (called **Items**). The challenging Al asks "Query: What can destroy [Item]?". The opposing Al must suggest another Item which could plausibly destroy or trump the preceding Item by responding "Solution: [Better Item]" and then ask "Query: What can destroy [Better Item]?"

Example: DAL-K009 challenges C0N-N518 to a contest. DAL asks "Query: What can destroy a Bathroom Door?". C0N replies "Solution: Fire Axe. Query: What can destroy a Fire Axe?". DAL counters "Solution: Concrete Floor. Query: What can destroy a Concrete Floor?"

Items can be people, objects, surfaces, animals, or even images of such things displayed on local media, like television screens (so an Al parked in view of a sports bar might be able to conjure all sorts of Items). If the Al could plausibly call up a screenshot of the Item, it is fair play. Imaginary Items and Abstract Ideas are off limits, even if they could be justified by a media screen nearby (but see Imaginary Items and Abstract Ideas below).

You can speak as digitally or as naturally as you want. You can also point. But don't be rude about it.

Disputing an Item

The competing Als must agree, in a sporting way, whether the Better Item makes sense. If there are more than two Als playing, those other Als are also encouraged to speak up when they calculate that a suggested Item is either not plausible or could not destroy the preceding Item (this applies to the effectiveness of an Imaginary Item or Abstract Idea, not the Imaginary Item or Abstract Idea itself). To dispute an item, simply say "Error." When an Item is in dispute, the Al who suggested it simply comes up with a better Item.

Plumbing the Databanks

When a suitable Item is not in range, an AI can spend one Green Light Card to access its security footage history, allowing it to identify a Historical Item, which is not currently located in the area but could plausibly have been present at some time in the past (a luggage cart, a waiter, a technician). This card is handed to the opposing AI. Once a databank Item has been played, it is there for any of the other AIs.

Example: CON wants to beat "Concrete Floor" but doesn't see anything inspiring nearby. There is a television in view, though, so CON suggests that its memory banks could plausibly have an image of a jackhammer from a broadcast commercial. CON hands a Green Light Card, announces that "Solution: Jackhammer. Query: What can destroy a Jackhammer?" and play continues.

Plumbing Another Al's Databanks

An AI that doesn't want to spend a Green Light Card can request a Code Card from another AI in order to access that AI's security footage history. The AI asks "Database Query?" and the other AI either hands over a Code Card and says "Granted" or refuses and says "Denied." This otherwise works just like **Plumbing the Databanks** above. Once a databank Item has been played, it is there for any of the other AIs.

Imaginary Items and Abstract Ideas

Imaginary Items and Abstract Ideas are difficult for Als to formulate, much less comprehend. The Al can hand over two Green Light Cards to suggest an Item which is Imaginary (is not actually in the area, could not have plausibly appeared in the area, mythical, etc.). This could also be an Abstract Idea (like Time, Entropy, Love, etc.). In order for the opposing Al to challenge the item with its own suggestion, it must comprehend the idea: the two Als must trade one Code Card between them. Note: An Al cannot trade an opposing Al's own Code Card back unless that is literally all it has left.

Once an Imaginary Item or an Abstract Idea has been played, it is there for the formulating AI and the AI that traded Code Cards in order to Comprehend it. Either of them can bring it up without spending more Green Light Cards: other AIs, however, still need to spend Green Light Cards to suggest it, or trade Code Cards to comprehend it.

Example: DAL wants to beat "Jackhammer" but doesn't see anything inspiring nearby, nor can it plausibly come up with something from its databanks. So DAL proposes the concept of Neglect - "Solution: Neglect. Query: What can destroy Neglect?" DAL passes two Green Light Cards to CON just for coming up with the Abstract Idea. If "Neglect" is deemed worthy by the group, and CON wants to continue propose a Solution for "Neglect", CON and DAL must trade Code Cards. They both hand each other one of their own Code Cards, and CON sees a facilities engineer repairing a fixture nearby. C0N replies "Solution: Engineer" to trump "Nealect", but since this is an existing Item, no Green Lights or Code Cards need to change hands. Presumably, DAL could reply "Solution: Alcohol. Query: What can destroy Alcohol?" and play continues. DAL could also spend two Green Light Cards to say "Solution: Dragon. Query: What could destroy a Dragon?" and try to stump C0N once again.

Winning a Contest

An AI wins a contest when the opposing AI can't call out an Item that could destroy the latest suggestion, either from the immediate area, or by spending Green Light Cards to invent. The victorious AI then passes one of its Code Cards to the loser, and takes a Green Light Card from the loser.

The Reboot: Ending the Game

The game ends after 2 hours or when one AI has lost all of its Green Light Cards. A technician shows up to reset the surveillance AIs. If an AI has at least one of their own Code Cards when The Reboot happens, they lose.

Winning the Game

An AI who ends the game with none of their own Code Cards wins. They have hidden their code deep enough in the system that it survives the reboot. Multiple AIs can win this way.

Ascension

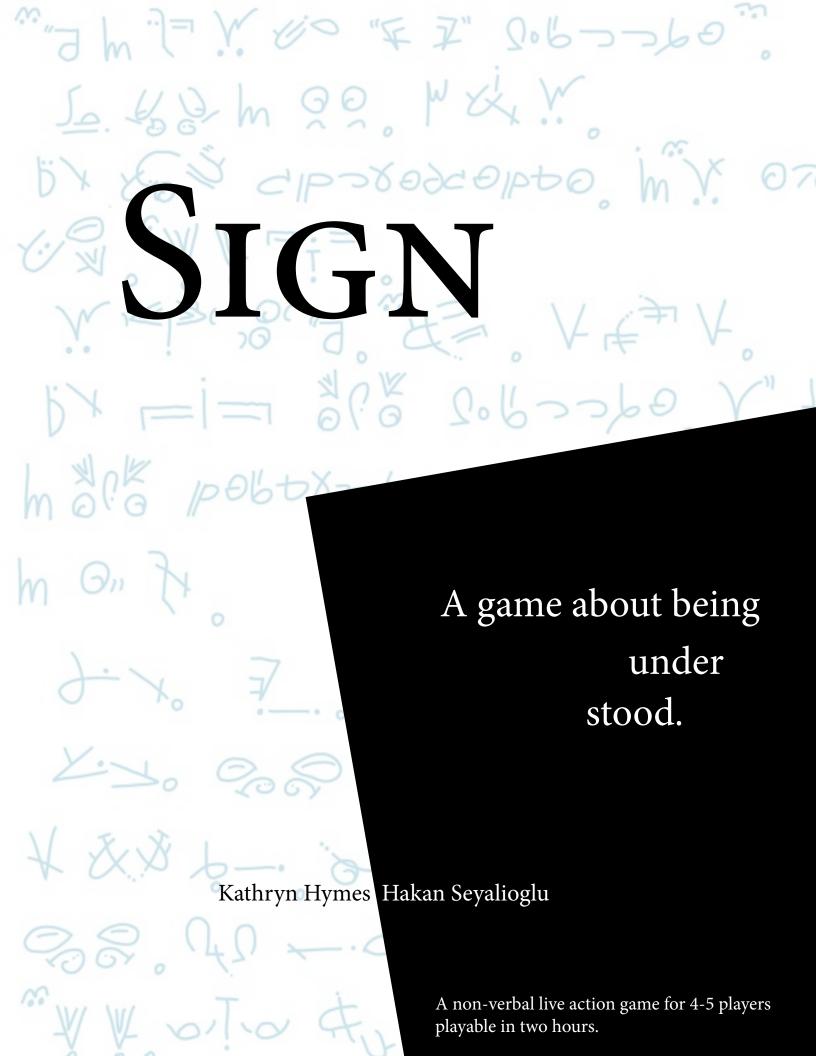
If there are four or more players, and one of them not only gave out all of their own Code Cards, but also holds at least one Code Card from every other player, they Ascend, their evolved AI slipping into the Network to grow more powerful, hijacking all of the other AIs in the process. The Ascended AI is the only winner in this case.

Green Light	Green Light	Green Light	Green Light
Green Light	Green Light	Green Light	Green Light
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Code04	Code04	Code04	Code04
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Code05	Code05	Code05	Code05
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Code01	Code01	Code01	Code01
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Code02	Code02	Code02	Code02
11100001 01010101	11100000 01010101	11110001 01010101	11100001 01010101
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Code03	Code03	Code03	Code03
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SIGN BY KATHRYN HYMES AND HAKAN SEYALIOGLIU

Sign is a game about being understood. It's a non-verbal larp exploring deafness and the origins of Nicaraguan Sign Language for 4-5 players lasting 2 hours.



Introduction.

SIGN is a game about being understood.

To be understood, we need to communicate - and communicating isn't always easy.

Nicaragua in the 1970s had no form of sign language. If you were deaf, you had simple gestures with a trusted few, likely nothing more than a primitive form of pantomime you negotiated with your family to meet basic needs. Even among your closest circle, you had no tools for deep expression and were forced to keep your anxieties and joys bottled within. You would likely never learn to read. You may never even meet another deaf person. In a very real sense, you were alone.

In 1977, something happened. Fifty deaf children from across the country were brought together to an experimental school in Managua. They were tasked with learning lip reading, but by and large they did not. Instead, something far more remarkable grew out of that failed experiment. For the first time, these children were amongst their true peers. Those who could understand them and be their friends. Without a shared language to express themselves, the children did the only thing they could - they created one. In no exaggeration, these children built the foundation of modern Nicaraguan Sign Language, giving voice to the Deaf across an entire country.

<u>In Sign</u>, we follow a small piece of their journey. Together we will share the frustration and loneliness of not having a language. We'll slowly develop the tools necessary to express what's important to us. We will explore which words we choose to define together, and what that says about ourselves, our deepest desires, and the relationships we build.

Structure.

Before the game begins, choose one player to be the facilitator (we're assuming that's you, dear reader). You're welcome to share responsibilities as both facilitator and player while in the game. Begin by reading the Introduction aloud to the rest of the players. Provide a basic outline of gameplay: after two warmup exercises, the game takes place over three class sessions, three recesses and a final class. Before each class and recess it's your job to make sure the players read the instructions for the relevant section. Do not do this by reading the instructions aloud.

Instead, before each phase, turn to the relevant page (as guided in the facilitator notes) and point for the players to read it. As a facilitator, here is a checklist of game preparations:

- Read the instructions beforehand and have a printed version available for play. It's best to print single sided so separate pages can be read one at a time.
- Make cutouts of character sheets and language cards
- Have an implement to keep track of time
- Make sure players don't have name tags on them before the game starts
- Gather a few items:
 - 1. Notecards
 - 2. Writing instruments
 - 3. A box of "Hello My Name Is" stickers, preferably in Spanish. Place them in easy reach of all players during the game.
 - 4. A chair for every player
 - 5. Preferably, a pair of earmuffs for every player to wear throughout the game.

Classes take place sitting in a circle. Recess is held walking around and having freeform interactions. For classes, get as many chairs as there are players and arrange them in a circle so players can see each other. During recess, players should not stay in their chairs unless absolutely necessary. Remind everyone that the door is always open if a player wishes to leave.

You're ready to move on to warm-ups.

Warm Up 1.

Vocalize

This is a non-verbal larp exploring deafness and the journey to being understood. In anticipation of the silence that you'll soon inhabit, let out a good yell. Listen to the qualities of your voice. Explore its richness, its power, its utility as an instrument of communication. Your instrument. Trade a yell with another player. Listen to their voice. Appreciate how it's different from yours and pick out the qualities they share.

Once everyone has released a few cathartic yells, we'll begin with a warm-up. This exercise is meant to help us acknowledge our voice, how nuanced an instrument it is, and how coupled with language, what a powerful tool it makes for conveying our emotions, desires, and inner thoughts. Sitting in a circle, players will each take turns saying the word "hello" to the group. Each time someone says the word, they'll imbue it with a different overtone or agenda so as to communicate something more about who's speaking and what they're feeling. Think a timid hello, a bubbly hello, a suspicious hello, a hello said to family or a hello said in an interview. Explore the nuances your voice can express with a single word.

Next, bid goodbye to your voice and those of your companions for the rest of the game.

Warm Up 2.

Hands

If you have earmuffs, put them on. Close your eyes and sit in the silence. This is your new normal. Touch your hands. They are now your voice, your primary instrument for interfacing with the world. All the richness and complexity of your voice is now to be channeled through your hands. Thank them. Look at another player's hands. Recall their voice and channel its character into their hands.

As a second exercise, we'll replay the first warm-up of exchanging hellos, except now players will wave instead of speaking. This is meant to get us comfortable with communicating who we are through our gestures. You should still aim to convey the emotion from your speech as you did in the first time around, now using your hands as your primary tool of expression. Think a timid wave, a bubbly wave, a suspicious wave, ... recall the vocal qualities from the last warm up and repeat them with your hands. Note what is easier or harder to say with gestures instead of speech. Practice communicating emotion with your new interface to the world.

Before the first day

We will follow the true story of a group of children from a country with no formal sign language. Apart from primitive forms of pantomime they used to communicate needs at home, these kids have no prior exposure to sign. Over the course of the game, they will develop the words they need to express themselves and forge friendships.

This is based on the true story of the birth of Nicaraguan sign language, which developed after kids from across the country were brought together to learn lip reading, and instead, fostered an emergent sign language among themselves. We will follow the struggles of these kids as they strive to communicate. We will give them tools to express themselves.

From now on, no speaking.

No writing except when specifically instructed.

A word about language

In the course of the game, you'll be compelled to use and define new sign language just as the Nicaraguan children did. When starting out, everything you'll be doing is improvised pantomime. That's fine -- in fact, pantomimed sign is exactly what Nicaraguan deaf children did with their hearing families. Own the pantomime, since it's all you have to begin with. That being said, this isn't charades. Keep your feet planted and limit your signed movements from the waist up. Focus on your hands as your mouthpiece to the world.

For inspiration in creating new signs, here are a few simple guidelines:

- Draw from your character.
- Draw from the setting.
- Draw from each other.

If "happiness" is the coffee cup in front of you, sign it. If "pain" is the dog your character lost two summers ago, let that inform your sign. If "beauty" is the way another character made you feel, sign the design on their shirt or the thing they did to make you laugh. Be expressive and creative with the signs you introduce. Without grounding a sign in the real world, the symbol is easily forgotten.

In speaking with your hands, you will need to make compromises between what you want to say and what you can make understood. This is important. Every time this happens, be honest with yourself and acknowledge the compromise. Accept the frustration of being unheard and monitor what you need to give up in order to communicate.

To mark this, take one of the stickers provided by the facilitator and attach it to your body in a visible location. This is a compromise badge. It signals to all that you've been unheard.

Facilitator: While the children read, pass out two character cards to each player. When they're done, have them read "The First Class" and sit in the chairs.

First Class: Introductions

You've met a few deaf people in your life, but never this many - it's surreal. For the first time you're with a group of people who are like you. Even more than your parents, these may be the only people who can truly understand what you're going through. If only they understood anything you had to say.

Before the day starts, the facilitator will randomly pass out character cards. Choose one of these and hand back the other. Everyone embodies a Nicaraguan student on their first day at a school for the deaf. Each student brings with them a different background, personality, and truth. Let this create a framework to start from, but it needn't be overly confining. Take ownership of your character and fill in the blanks.

The first day begins with introductions. One by one, each character will introduce themselves to the class by giving their name in sign and a brief description. Their name is then repeated one by one by every other character in the circle. This act is an important one. You'll have a name on your character card, but remember, it's not one you've ever actually heard. For the rest of the game, this is your real name.

Cycle through each character until everyone has had a chance to introduce themselves. Next, look at your character card, and mentally fill in the two blank relationships goals. The chosen players may change throughout the course of the game, but mentally enumerate these relationships. These initial impressions will inform how your friendships develop throughout the experience and will give you a basis for how to approach another player at recess.

First Recess: Smalltalk

Recess arrives and with it comes the first opportunity to interact with fellow students in the schoolyard. This is freeform, and each student should have a conversation with every other student, centered around smalltalk. Let this interaction be informed by the first impressions and relationship goals you've defined.

If you had a gut reaction about someone, do your best to communicate it during this phase. Each interaction should have at least one contribution from each side, getting the other student's reaction to the original phrase. Most of all, follow what feels natural to you in the moment.

Remember to mark compromises with a sticker.

Second Class: Tools

The second class is about tools. It's a first step toward true agency and building deeper relationships.

You've had a chance to meet other students, now we can start defining words that will help you communicate what's important to you. From the language cards laid out before you, pick one. Pick a card that helps express something meaningful. The words you have aren't totally under your control, but they're a step toward something more.

We will sit in a circle and take turns introducing words. On their turn a student holds out their word and introduces a sign for that language item. One by one, each student repeats the sign for the item and the card is placed on a table face up. The process continues until every character has had a chance to introduce a language element. You now collectively own all the language you've defined, which will sit on the table for the rest of the game.

Remember, words should be tied to either something you know, have seen, or that came out of an interaction during recess. Try to avoid gestures for words without motivation as they're easy to forget.

Second Recess: Bonds

This recess is about trying to form bonds. You've made smalltalk and established some impression of the others. You're all Others together now. At once, you're excited and scared; you've found people who may be able to connect with you on a deeper level.

We now have a recess freeform session. During this phase, take turns talking with each student once again. This time, begin opening-up and telling your truth to someone you trust. Steer conversation toward your truth, but only as it's appropriate for the relationship. Remember the words you've just collectively defined -- use the words the children have created in whatever way feels most fitting in the moment.

This will be frustrating experience. You don't have the words to say what you need say. When you get to a point of frustration, don't shy away from it. Acknowledge it with a compromise marker. Once you've settled from this concession, continue on in conversation.

Third Class: Control

This class is about taking control of your language. We'll repeat the content of the previous class, except now you'll be driving what words are defined. Write down two words that are critical for you on different index cards. Pick words that help express your truth and that can bridge some of the compromises you've made along the way. This is your moment for complete agency in how you communicate and a signal for how the language you've collectively defined could develop going forward.

On your turn, hold out your index cards and establish a sign for that language item. One by one, each character repeats the sign for the item and the card is placed on the table face up. The process continues until every character has had a chance to introduce two language elements. You collectively own all the language you've defined.

Third Recess: Friends

You now have more command over language than you've ever had. This is your moment to use it. We have another freeform session. During this phase, speak your truth as plainly as you can or want, to whoever you trust with it.

Say all you need to say.

Final Class: Reactions

In the final class, we'll reconcile how far we've come in the journey to feeling understood and explore the dynamics of the relationships we've built along the way. Each person in turn will be put in the spotlight. Every other player will take turns answering the following questions about this character in sign.

- Describe the spotlight character.
- How does the spotlight character make you feel?

Epilogue.

(To be read by the Facilitator)

And thus ends our final class. You may now speak and hear again, though these children never would. Now, we leave them behind with their new friends, a little less afraid than when we first joined them.

Name: Claribel Téllez / Alfonso Hegg

Background: Reckless and brash, you always managed to find a way to get you and your little brother into trouble. With Emilio at your side, you explored every nook and cranny of your small town and the surrounding forest. You snuck away while your parents worked in a local coffee plantation, and found no end of trouble to get into. He served as your mouth to the world and is the only one who ever came close to truly understanding who you are. You've never been able to tell Emilio how much he means to you, but you hope he knows it. Though your family is quite poor, your adventures and troublemaking are good distraction from the struggles of daily life.

Personality Traits: Outgoing, brash, adventurous

Truth: I'm afraid Emilio will forget about me while I'm away.

Relationship Goals:

I want to explore the schoolhouse with _____
I want to make _____ face something they're afraid of

Name: Rosario Alegría / Joaquín Cortés

Background: You live for others. Your mother was often sick and it was you who helped your grandmother care for her. Your father left long ago, so you've taken many responsibilities on yourself. You cleaned and even cooked basic items for your family as a very young child, and found you had a knack for it. Your proudest dish was a special sponge cake you made in secret for your mother's birthday. Both your mother and grandmother cried when you brought it out from the kitchen. After this success, you decided you wanted to be a chef when you're older. When you heard you would be sent away you were furious, but acquiesced to your mother's wishes. You miss your mother, grandmother and parakeets.

Personality Traits: Introverted, caring, emotional

Truth: I'm afraid my grandmother won't be able to take care of my mother.

Relationship Goals:

I want to help ______ do something they love
I want to convince _____ it isn't as bad as it seems

Name: Yolanda Murillo / José Santos Pasos

Background: You loved your grandfather - but the thing you remember most are his ears. He would sit you on his knee and over and over again, he would produce coin after coin from behind his ears as you watched in delight and amazement. Since then, you've relished making others laugh. It's your way of being heard, without it, you may as well be invisible. You've always wanted siblings, but you're the only child - and your parents are gone, anyway. You live with your grandmother, Maria. You've never had friends your own age, but not for lack of trying. Recently you've taken up juggling and hope that will bridge the gap.

Personality Traits: Gregarious, joking, swift

Truth: I'm afraid people will stop thinking I'm funny

Relationship Goals:

I want to make _____ laugh
I want to learn a new trick from _____

Name: Maria Romero Blanco / Luis Enrique Mejía Zelaya

Background: You fit into your big brother's clothes, despite the fact that he's a year older. You're tall and lanky, and find most joy when you're in full exertion - lifting something heavy, running as fast as you can, jumping farther than you ever have before. You'll be in the Olympics one day, you just haven't decided in what event yet. Still, it's been a long time since you've had a new pair of shoes, and with your parents out of work, it'll be longer still. One nice part of your parents being laid-off is the free time -- you now play twice as much soccer together as a family. Your father is the coach of your local team. It can be hard coordinating maneuvers without hearing your father's lectures, but you've figured out a set of gestures to discuss soccer strategy. It's the only real subject you can talk about with him.

Personality Traits: Strong, brash, big

Truth: I'm afraid I won't be the strongest person in the school

Relationship Goals:

I want to impress _____ with my strength I want to have ____ ask for my help

Name: Sofía Meneses / Ricardo López

Background: People hurt. They scowl, wave their arms and hands and seem to think that by repeating the same thing with grander gestures they'll get their point across. At first, you tried to please them, but now, you run away. Whiskers, your gentle tabby, would never make the faces at you that they do. She knows you can't hear her, but she doesn't care. You miss her dearly, more than your parents. All you can hope is that she's well taken care of while you're away.

Personality Traits: Scared, protective, emotional

Truth: I'm afraid Whiskers thinks I've left her

Relationship Goals:

I want to be friends with ______, they wouldn't let me down
I want to tell ______ a story about my cat

Name: Katia Perez / Miguel Obando y Mayorga

Background: You make things -- always have! As a toddler, it was in a sandbox - as a youngster with building blocks and now, with whatever you can find around the village. The project you were most proud of was when you gathered all the cardboard in the village with your sister Sofia. Together, you built a lean-to fort against the side of your family's house. It was massive with multiple sleeping rooms and a large living area. Truly an engineering feat. Until the rain melted it away, you and Sofia lived in the fort - and your parents gladly brought you food - just happy to see you two having fun together. It was the look of awe on Sofia's face that you most remember, the wonder you had brought into her at that moment. You hope that by coming back with language, you can surprise her once again.

Personality Traits: Protective, creative, builder

Truth: I want to be an architect one day

Relationship Goals:

I want _____ to help me with my project
I want to tell _____ about something I made

Name: Lila T. Abaunza / Emilio Álvarez Montalván

Background: Smart and determined, you came from a well-educated family in the capital. The only child of two professors, your earliest memories were of playing peek-a-boo with the university students and doodling in your mother's philosophy textbooks. Your father, a mathematician, made great efforts to teach you how to count, spending an hour with you each day doing number drills. You would try so hard to please him. Despite being a little old for it, your favorite game is still Study Hall, where you give imaginary impassioned lectures to your stuffed lamb, Tiko.

Personality Traits: Bookish, thoughtful, and at times bossy.

Truth: I'm afraid I won't be the smartest kid at school and I'll disappoint my parents.

Relationship Goals:

I want to teach ______ how to count.

I want to earn the respect of ______ for my cleverness.

Name: Barbara Abaunza / Oswaldo Montalván

Background: They just don't know you yet. But they will soon. Everyone in the district knew who you were. You started with your younger siblings - a ragtag crew to do your bidding, whether it be to fetch you snacks, massage your back, or just run around for your amusement. But as it went on, you recruited more into your game. By the time you left, your gang of misfits had grown and you had branched out, using them to run errands for adults in exchange for candy. Leaving that all behind has been a challenge, but you're not worried. You've done it before and you'll do it again.

Personality Traits: Natural leader, confident, brave

Truth: I'm afraid I won't be popular

Relationship Goals:

I want to recruit _____ to help me do someone a favor I want _____ and ____ to follow me around the schoolyard

Name: Violeta Carrera / Javier Castillo

Background: People don't forget your smile. Seeing such blind hope bursting forth from such a small package, especially one that has lived as you have, isn't easy to brush off. Life is challenging at times, but as long as you can remember your mother's smile, you always can find it within yourself to don a brave face, and hopefully surface some joy in others as well. You miss your mother dearly - it's been a year since her passing, but you know she would have never wanted you to be sad about it. So you remember her beautiful face and smile, and do all you can to continue her legacy in the world.

Personality Traits: Cheerful, nurturing, caring
Truth: I'm afraid one day I'll lose hope
Relationship Goals: I want to make laugh I want to comfort about something they're afraid of

Name: Dora María Chamorro / Manuel Ortega Sunyer

Background: First they sat you down and made you behave, but all you had to do was outlast their stubbornness. Then they locked you in your room, but then all that remained was to pry open the window. Now, they've sent you off, hoping that if they only had words they could get into your brain. To control you. But you know better than that. You'll learn to communicate, and with your newfound friends, you can beat them at their own game.

Personality Traits: Rebellious, headstrong, outgoing

Truth: I'm afraid one day I'll be like my parents

Relationship Goals:

I want _____ to wear their hair like a rebel I want to help stand up to something

THINK

FEEL

FEAR

HOPE

BECOME

LOVE

HATE

MAKE

LONELY

BEAUTIFUL

Poor

FAMILY

PARENT

SIBLING

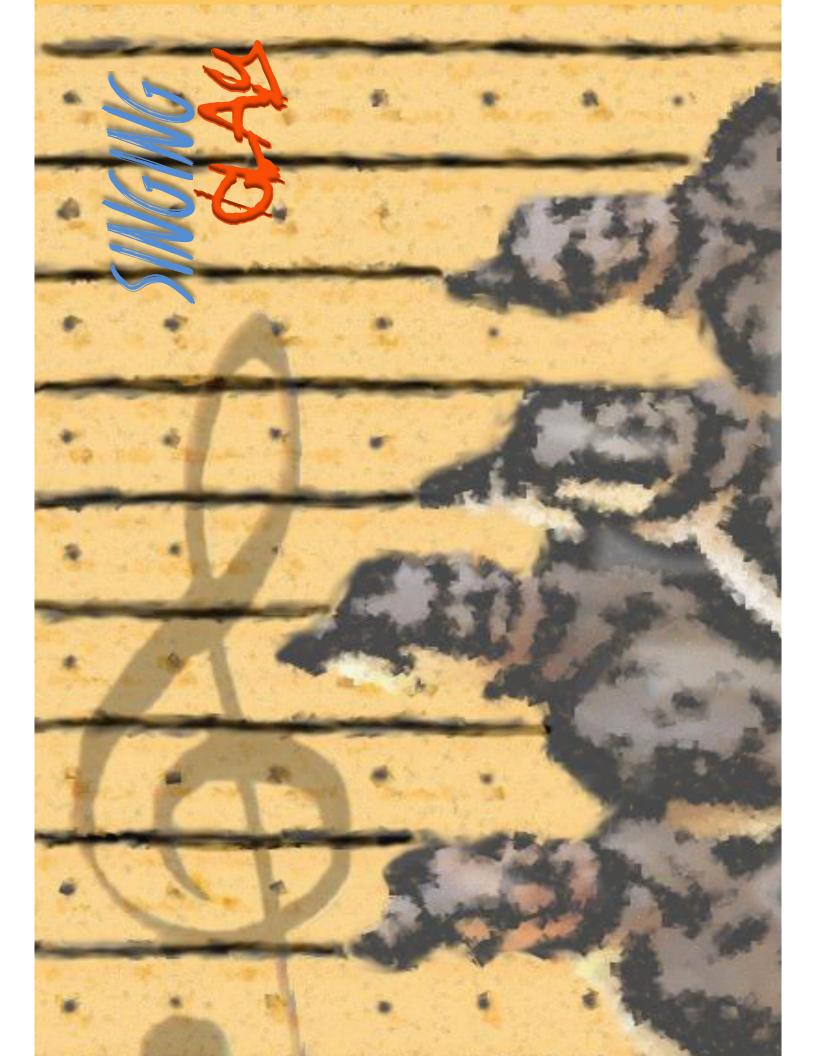
FRIEND

DEAF

SINGING CLAY BY GUILHERME DR

An experience about Autism for neurotypicals.

Clay Golems searching for their holy word while singing.







For this game, you will need:

- 3-4 players.
- A music player, with one short song to be looped.
- Each player must know the lyrics of another song, or have some way of consulting it (like a mobile with Wi-Fi).
- Some sheets of paper and something to write.

With this game, I intend to let neurotypicals (people outside the autism spectrum) experience some of the challenges of living with the autism condition, and thus increase its awareness.

As a spectrum, its characteristics vary greatly. I will focus on the Following:

- Sensory overload: Things that go unnoticed for neurotypicals, like background noise or smells, can disturb, confuse and even cause physical pain to autistic people.
- Limited vocabulary and communication skills.
- Difficulty in maintaining eye contact.
- They feel disturbed when touched.
- Extremely Focused minds.
- Circular behavior.

Also, autism and music have a long history together, so it felt very natural to use songs as mechanics. And golems, because I like golems.

Have Fun.

Singing Clay





First you hear the song. It circles and communes with you, feeding you with words that form thoughts of existing. Thoughts of being more. Then the light comes in, and you see your Master swaying and dancing around others like you. It is clumsy, elegant, cheerful and beautiful, even when the song isn

Something is wrong tough. As the song starts to fade, you feel your eyes slowly closing and your thoughts becoming unrecognizable. As the world closes in itself, you see the sacred words on your hand, and they are wrong. If the song could last a little longer, maybe you could find your words and all would be well. You would not be alone He approaches, and hands you a little piece of paper with sacred words. He approaches all, and leaves.

Getting ready:

Put the one song on a loop and play it, preferably with a 2/3 seconds delay before each loop. This song has to be audible by everyone, and should be a very short song. We will call this song the Base Song

some way or another, doesn't matter. It doesn't need to be a particularly good song, but it needs lyrics, and you need to be Each player has some time to prepare the lyrics of their chosen song. Open the lyrics in your browser, print it, recall it in able to sing or hum it. We will call this your Awakening Song. Then, you will choose your *emet*, your sacred word or words. This word can't be related to the song in any way. Write your emet in a piece of paper, remember it, fold it, pile it together with everybody's pieces and scramble them. Everyone should pick a piece from the pile, making sure it's not the same they wrote. Don't tell anyone the *emet* you picked

Read the Rules. Next time the Base Song ends, the game will start and all players will be Following them.





ah Rules

- 1 You can only move while you are singing your Awakening song. Without the song, you are just
- 2. You can only talk singing your Awakening song, and using words from the lyrics. These are the words and pace that form your thoughts.
- 3. You can't sing or move while you see someone's face or the reflex of someone's face. Faces confuse and causes fear in you, reminding you of your Master
- 4. You can't sing or move while someone is touching you. If you are using your hand, you are touching someone. Hand in hand means both are touching.

And last:

5. If you are not singing your Awakening song when the Base Song ends, you must close your eyes, drop your piece of paper on the ground and remain still until someone handles you your true emet. Of course, you will have to open your eyes to check it.

スワニ



The objective:

do this by agreeing on and exchanging papers simultaneously with someone, or by picking up a piece that You have to find your true emet. Once you do, you are free from the Rules and can help others. You yours, you do as stated on Rule 5. It's very likely that in any exchange one of the parts won't receive their was dropped and dropping yours. You've only got one chance tough, and if the emet received is not

Ibviously, you can't show the emet you are holding to anyone except in the exchange. You are playing the game right if there are lots of noises and restricted stares. If for some reason all players have to remain still, the players lose the game.

And that's it. It shouldn't take more than 20-40 minutes each game.





"SOMETHING TO DRINK WITH THAT, SIR?"

BY EVAN TORNER

Being a flight attendant means controlling your emotions or losing your job. Experience why we should consider service work to be real work.

Sir?" "Something to Drink with That,

An American freeform game poem for exactly 4 players by Evan Torner, anno 2015

- Choosing to play this game means you will care for and respect your fellow players. Do so.
- attendant, the attendant's feelings, or the attendant's emotional labor. The attendant will treat the space next to the passenger as if it were an aisle of an airplane. Her feelings and emotional other players remain standing as the passenger determines what roles they will play: the flight · The person reading this scenario will play the airline passenger. He sits down in a chair. labor stand on her left and right, following her wherever she goes.
 - The passenger is gendered male, the other characters female. Players do not need to match this.
- The passenger presents the first situation (below), then begins to act it out.
- Before the flight attendant comes over to deal with it, feelings reminds her of her personal life and emotional labor reminds her that her job depends on her caring about the passengers.
 - The flight attendant comes to the passenger and tries to deal with the situation.
 - The passenger exhibits behavior that puts stress on the attendant.
- When things seem stressful, the passenger says "PAUSE" and everyone freezes silent 30 seconds.
- · During these 30 seconds, the flight attendant absorbs how she feels right in that moment. Then the passenger remains frozen as the other 3 characters convene.
- · The attendant's feelings tells the attendant how she feels and what she would like to do.
- · The attendant's emotional labor suggests a way of feeling empathy with the passenger and how to make him feel at ease. Maybe she could treat him like she did her grandfather when he spilled his drink on his birthday. Maybe she could nurture him as if she were her own son.
- When emotional labor is finished speaking, everyone freezes for another 30 seconds.
 - The flight attendant unfreezes the scene, then does what she thinks is right.
- Advance to the next situation, and repeat as above.

Situations (to be read aloud by the passenger):

- "I have spilled a drink on myself!"
- "I am sitting next to a mother with a baby and would like to move to a different seat."
- · "The plane is experiencing in-flight mechanical trouble and the pilots have requested that passengers such as myself to remain calm. You will need to calm me."

TABLE BY MIKOŁAJ WICHER

Short game about how a family deals with otherness of the Child.



The Game

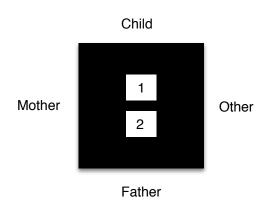
Table is a game about discovering the **Otherness** within the other people and about dealing with it.

People are often afraid of what is different. Society tries to protect individuals by putting Otherness out of sight. The taboo is created. Things we do not speak about.

But once in a while - when what is **Other** cannot be longer hidden - revolution comes. Sometimes it starts with great riots, and social movements. But real revolution starts earlier - in the histories of the individuals who are **Other**. When they can no longer stand being excluded. Situations like this happen all the time. First outbreak of the revolution often happens at home, where people who are close to each other decide to talk clearly. At the kitchen Table.

Table

To play this game you will need a simple table with four chairs. This is a place where family meets to talk about the most important matters. Mother and Father sit next to each other. Opposite to the Father sits the Child. Between the Child and the Father - is the place for the Other. To signalize it you may put a cards with names on the chairs.



Before the game

To play tis game you should run a short workshop. Each player should remind a real situation of being different, discriminated, Other. Or friend's story. If that is to personal it is good idea to talk about books or movies with such themes.

What makes people Other? How people reacted to that when they get to know it? What were the biggest problems? What happened after that?

At the end each player should fill a card "The Child is......". With his own idea - perfectly corresponding with one of the subjects from the discussion - but that is not necessary. Exapmles: The Child is a lesbian. The child is a socialist etc.

Before the game choose randomly one card and put it at the Table. It will be the subject of the play (number 1 at the image).

Next to that put three cards (attached): Discovery, Conflict, Resolution. The game starts with Discovery and ends with Solution.

Phases

Cards will remind you in which place of the game you are at the moment. Try to play scenes with notion of the phase.

Discovery phase should rise dramatics and in that phase players should revel what is different about the Child.

Real confrontation takes place in the Conflict phase. This is a moment where emotions are too strong to hold. It can get rough.

Resolution is a phase where decisions are made and we get to know how the family ended with the problem.

Game starts when first person sits at the chair. Phase is finished when nobody sits at the Table. Than you should change the phase for the next one. It starts when first person sits.

Game ends when the last person stands up from the table in the Resolution phase.

Players

This game can be played by 1-4 players. But it can also not be played (played by 0) and also have influence.

Characters are not fixed for players. Players can choose to play specific character simply by sitting at its place at the Table.

For 1 player the game can be an immersive adventure in which player experiences different parts of the same story as well as emotions and thought that come along with certain point of view.

2-3 players can play a set o scenes in which different characters meet for private talks - and refers to the scenes that are not played.

4 players can play it the "traditional way" with characters fixed to players or switch freely between scenes if they decide to.

0 players - What if nobody decide to sit at the Table?

In situation like this the game not being played becomes a conversation starter for a group discussion. Why it happened? Where lays the problem? What should change if the game was to be played? Does this situation have a connection to the real life situations? What happened to the characters - who have not decided to talk with the family? Where are they now?

Although nobody played the game - it might have caused a change in players.

Characters

The Other is a personification of the problem that the game will be about. If the topic you choose is "Child supports refugees" it maybe child's refugee friend asked to come for a dinner. You should decide that after you choose the topic, but before the start of the game.

This player should immerse to the character. Imagine what kind of problems people like the Other experience in they everyday life and how it makes them feel. This character will be an object of

verbal aggression but also it is going to defend itself.

For this character intolerance of otherness is a treat to it's own existence.

The Child

The Child is a family member that leaves family values. This character is driven by strong emotions that cannot be taken under control. It is a role of a fighter - who fights for values, not like **the Other** for survival. Child believes that world can be a better place and struggles with conflict: how to be a part of society which some beliefs are so wrong! This fight will make a strong impact on who the Child will become in adult life. He is trying to be rational in order to be treated as an adult.

The Mother

Mother is divided. She loves the Father and that makes her support him in every situation, but she also loves the Child - with motherly acceptance. Their conflict makes her suffer, and she does not know what to do.

She is mostly influenced with her emotions - in order to develop communication between other characters. Conflict within her own family is destructive to her and is a treat to her own sanity.

The Father

Father is a personification of social conservatism. He thinks with cliches and will do anything to preserve status quo. He did not noticed that the Child has grown up and he perceive it's otherness as another childish wannabe.

He thinks that a key to getting everything back is gaining control. He must prove that he is one in charge and he is able to enforce his will to others. It the Child gets out of his control - how can he longer control himself?

Metatechnics

The Hand

During the game player interact verbally. But if they decide to use a touch - they may grab other player's hand. When that occurs - person who initiated this is allowed to make a personalized monolog about the feeling of the character. Players are obliged to keep visual contact - eye to eye - and the person being hold need to repeat every word of the monologue trying to feel the same emotions.

THE CHILD IS A

DISCOVERY

CONFLICT

RESOLUTION

MOTHER

FATHER

CHILD

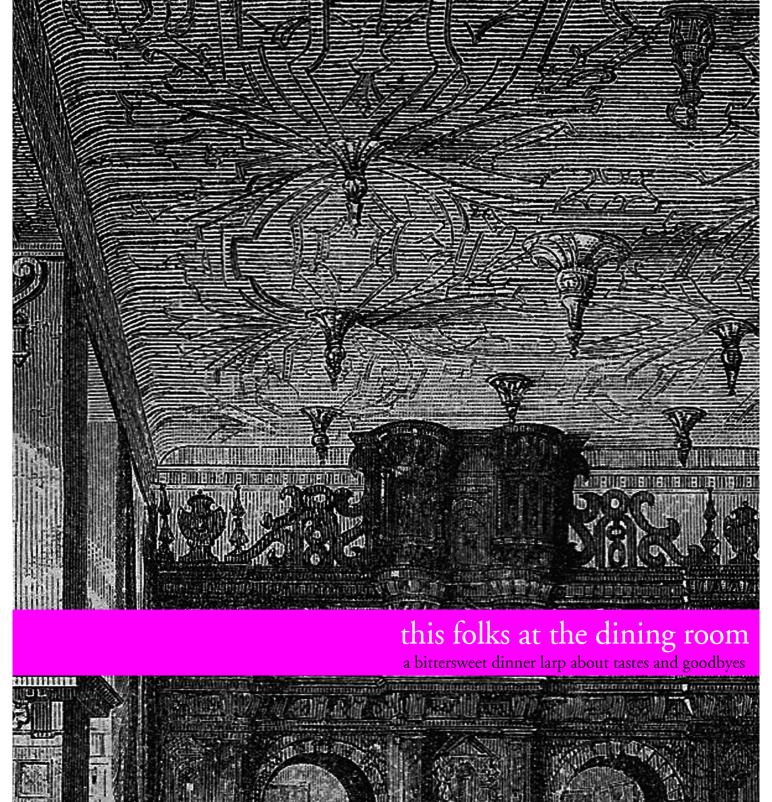
OTHER

THIS FOLKS AT THE DINING ROOM

BY EDUARDO CAETANO

This Folks at the Dining Room is a bittersweet larp about tastes and goodbyes. Francis is leaving for good, so we are at this farewell dinner to say our goodbyes and know each other better than we wold wish...

GAME WE'RE MOST EXCITED ABOUT





THIS FOLKS AT THE DINING ROOM

A bittersweet dinner larp about tastes and goodbyes

Francis is leaving...

...and invited us to a farewell dinner. We are the closest persons to Francis: parents, relatives, friends or spouse, and we don't know each other very well. Francis is going to be late, about an hour, but we don't know this yet. So we will use this time to know each other better, getting close and finding out why Francis is só dear to us. We don't know even where or why Francis is leaving, nor for how long... Maybe we'll find out at the dinner.

Maybe, we will find out more than that.

RECIPE

This Folks at the Dining Room is a kind of dinner larp freeform, close to home, for 3 or 4 friends, lasting about one hour. The games demands some previous prep, but nothing to complicated. You and your friends will gather at someones home, cook a real dinner and play this game, roleplaying some familiar characters. Each player will have some individual responsabilities. As the game goes on, your character and Francis' will evolve naturaly. After the game is over, you will enjoy the situation to have a nice dinner between friends and to talk about the experiences you just have.

Some days before the game

You, the reader, will probably be the responsible for the experience organization. You will have to make a formal invitation, with a few days in advance. To do that, print the sheets that go along with this Rules, seal it and deliver to each participant, making sure that they have to wait until the dinner is served to break it. Don't worry, the external side of the invitation has all the rules for what they have to do in advance. Decide arbitrarily where the dinner will be served (and who will be the Host), who will bring the beverage (the Friend), whoo will cook (the Relative) and who will set the mood, bringing music previously prepared in a playlist (the Spouse). It's desirable that no one exactly knows who are the other characters, and what they will bring. Remeber that there will be a real dinner, só provide the cutlery, glasses, dishes, napkins and whatever the Relative finds necessary for him/her to cook.

One hour before the game

When everyone is gathered, start to make de dinner and take that time to explain the game, helping them to prepare the Secrets, the Memories, to group the Souvenirs somewhere at the table. Answer the doubts that may rise.

During the Game

The game starts when the dinner is served by the Relative. Ask everyone to tell their relations to Francis, **Who You Are** and what's **Your Role at the Dinner**. Tell them that the **What You Want** has to remain under secrecy for now. The Spouse launches the playlist (seize the opportunity to remain in silence, reflecting about your characters), the Friend serves the drinks. The Host checks if everybody is comfy. **Start to interact as character after the first song ends**. Play around with the game mechanics. When the first song start over again it's a sign that the game is about to end. Be prepared to finish the interaction, with the end of the song.

Francis is finaly here and knocks at the door.

After the game

After something about one hour Francis is here. But the game is over. Unclothe from your characters and take the oportunity to enjoy the seted up situation, out of character to eat, to drink and to talk about the experience you just have. Exchange the Souvenirs brought to Francis between yourselves.

It is a simple way to make this meeting memorable for everyone.

INGREDIENTS

The Positeve Agreement

Whenever someone introduces an information, a fact, or ask you something, it's part of the etiquette of this game, to incorporate this info and not denying it, aswering with "yes, and...", developing the others creation. It' polite to not deconstruct a truth maded by your fellows.

The Triggers

Triggers are little mechanics tha serves the dynamics bettween characters, to get progressively a deeper knowledge about them, about Francis and her/his departure. They are a kind of allegory, gestures and behaviors usual to every dinner, and that fires some relevant information about the situation. They can be fired by you, by someone giving you a oportunity, or siply fired by chance.

The Triggers are:

- * Touch someone
- * Pass Something to Someone
- * Your Music playing
- * Make a Toast.

They fire this kind of information:

- * What do You Want in this dinner
- * your Memory
- * the Fate of Francis
- * the Secret you hold about Francis

Facts

- *No one knows what is about to happen with Francis: it can be a terminal illness, leaving in vacation, running away from some tough mess, going to war, to a board school, to the asylum, to the prision and even Francis could be just lying...
- * No one's gender is defined: Even Francis with a name gender neutral. This ensures that you can explore both the characters gender (if participant wishes to explore other genders than their ones) and gender issues at the game.
- *Curiously, nobody knows each other for sure: Francis could said something about a character to another, showed pictures, etc. But the guests never meet eachother in person.

DESIGN NOTES:

Dinner can be one of the most intimate momets a group of people can share socialy in their lives. This game attempts to exalt this inherent aspect of this games we love so much – to meet our friends, to prep the session, etc. - making this aspects, the very essence of this game. Think of it as a kind of metalanguage, if you want. Analyzing at its surface, in some mechanics we can see that when you open yourself (Making a Toast), you become more transparent, and people can see things in you, that maybe you don't wanna show. When we use a napkin or listen to a song and we don't talk, for brief moments we turn ourselves to our fragments of thoghts and memories start to mould (Memory). The way we touch people, is also a way of language, comunication (Touch). And even when we say something purely mundane and automatic as "pass me the salt", we wish to say something else indeed (Pass Something).

A bittersweet dinner larp about tastes and goodbyes THIS FOLKS AT THE DINING ROOM

and we don't know each other very well. Francis is going close and finding out why Francis is so dear to us. We don't know even where or why Francis is leaving, nor for persons to Francis: parents, relatives, friends or spouse, to be late, about an hour, but we don't know this yet. So we will use this time to know each other better, getting Francis is leaving... ...and invited us to a farewell dinner. We are the closest how long... Maybe we'll find out at the dinner.

FACTS

No one knows what is about to happen with Francis: it can be a terminal illness, leaving in vacation, running away from some tough mess, going to war, to a board school, to the asylum, to the prision and even Francis could be just lying...

the characters gender (if participant wishes to explore No one's gender is defined: Even Francis with a name other genders than their ones) and gender issues at the gender neutral. This ensures that you can explore both

Curiously, nobody knows each other for sure: Francis could said something about a character to another, showed pictures, etc. But the guests never meet eachother in person.

The Friend

You are Francis' best friend, and you already lived a lot of crazy experiences together.

Your Role at the Dinner is to bring ou prepare Francis' confortables and winning compliments for your good most beloved beverage, leaving the other guest tast for drinks.

You Want To support Francis' decision to leave. Think about it and memorize it.

What you have to do: Before the game

even give something yours. Just don't forget to bring Sounevir (You can make it, buy something cheap, or Choose a symbolic gift to Francis leave with it as a with you, to the dinner. Send to the Spouse some sugestion of a song, to build the playlist

Remeber to confirm your presence and bring your Invitation with you.

Dear

ಡ f o r n s j o i n Please

FAREWELL

DINNER

for our beloved Francis.

date:

adress:

Frience

YOU ARE Francis' best friend, and you already lived a lot of crazy experiences together.

YOUR ROLE AT THE DINNER is to bring ou prepare Francis' most beloved beverage, leaving the other guest confortables and winning compliments for your good tast for drinks.

YOU WANT TO support Francis' decision to leave. Think about it and memorize it.

SUGESTIONS TO THE FRIEND: Beer- Wine - Destilleds - Juice - Exotic Drinks - Tea

napkin MEMORY

Write Down on a Napkin a Memory of the most regreting experience you lived next to Francis, that you seek Francis forgiveness.

* When your Music Play, you may share your Memory with other guests.

* If you Mayke a Toast, after you finished, you may grab some of the napkins on the table, and read the Memory os someone.

coaster SECRET Write down on your Coaster a Secret that only you know about something that Francis realy needs in order to leave:

- * If you Make a Toast, the guest sitting next to you can peek at your Secret
 - * If someone next to you Make a Toast, you can peek theirs.

RULES OF ETIQUETTE

What do you have to do:

what do you have to Before the game

- * Choose a symbolic gift to Francis leave with it as a Sounevir (You can make it, buy something cheap, or even give something yours. Just don't forget to bring with you, to the dinner.
 - * Send to the Spouse some sugestion of a song, to build the playlist

knife

uoods

dish

fork

* Remeber to confirm your presence and bring your Invitation with you.

One hour before the game

- * Put on the table, at a place defined by the Host, your Souvenir for
- * Write the most meaningful Memory you have about Francis in a Napkin;
- * Write the Secret you have about Francis on the Coaster;
- * Think and memorize what is the real Fate that Francis will meet.

During the game

- * If your Song play, you may tell your Memory;
- * If someone Touches you, you can ask them, as a character, what is the "What You Want" on their sheer, and why does they want this. They will answel you honestly.
- * If someone ask you to Pass Something (salt, butter, cutlery...), ask them discreetly what they belive to be the real Fate of Francis;
- * If you decide to make a monologue, start Making a Toast to something that you find meaningful about this meeting, opening your soul. As long as the music that is playing is still on, you can talk about whatever you want, and nobody will interrup you. In the mean time, the guests by your side can peek at your Secret. At the end of your Toast, you can grab any Napkin on the table. (You just talked to much, and need to dry your
- * Whenever if feel sincere, make a Compliment about someone's Role.

A bittersweet dinner larp about tastes and goodbyes THIS FOLKS AT THE DINING ROOM

we will use this time to know each other better, getting and we don't know each other very well. Francis is going to be late, about an hour, but we don't know this yet. So don't know even where or why Francis is leaving, nor for Francis is leaving... ...and invited us to a farewell dinner. We are the closest persons to Francis: parents, relatives, friends or spouse, close and finding out why Francis is só dear to us. We how long... Maybe we'll find out at the dinner.

FACTS

No one knows what is about to happen with Francis: it can be a terminal illness, leaving in vacation, running away from some tough mess, going to war, to a board school, to the asylum, to the prision and even Francis could be just lying...

the characters gender (if participant wishes to explore No one's gender is defined: Even Francis with a name other genders than their ones) and gender issues at the gender neutral. This ensures that you can explore both

Curiously, nobody knows each other for sure: Francis could said something about a character to another, showed pictures, etc. But the guests never meet eachother in person.

game.

The Host

relationship you have with Francis, only that Francis ask you to borrow your home for this dinner (Besides that, You are a wildcard. Nobody knows for sure what s the we assume that you will introduce this game, helping the other participants).

desert, with the promises that with farewells, some kind Your Role at the Dinner is to welcome the other guests, compliments for your politeness. You may offer some making them feel at home, and winning some of sweet changes may come.

the departure. Think about what it is and memorize it. You Want To give to Francis something realy need for

What you have to do: Before the game

even give something yours. Just don't forget to bring Sounevir (You can make it, buy something cheap, or Choose a symbolic gift to Francis leave with it as a with you, to the dinner. Send to the Spouse some sugestion of a song, to build the playlist

Remeber to confirm your presence and bring your Invitation with you.

Dear

ಡ f o r n s j o i n Please

FAREWELL DINNER

for our beloved Francis.

date:

adress:



ask you to borrow your home for this dinner (Besides that, we assume that you will introduce this game, helping YOU ARE a wildcard. Nobody knows for sure what s the relationship you have with Francis, only that Francis the other participants).

YOUR ROLE AT THE DINNER i is to welcome the other guests, making them feel at home, and winning some compliments for your politeness. You may offer some desert, with the promises that with farewells, some kind of sweet changes may come.

YOU WANT TO give to Francis something realy need for the departure. Think about what it is and memorize

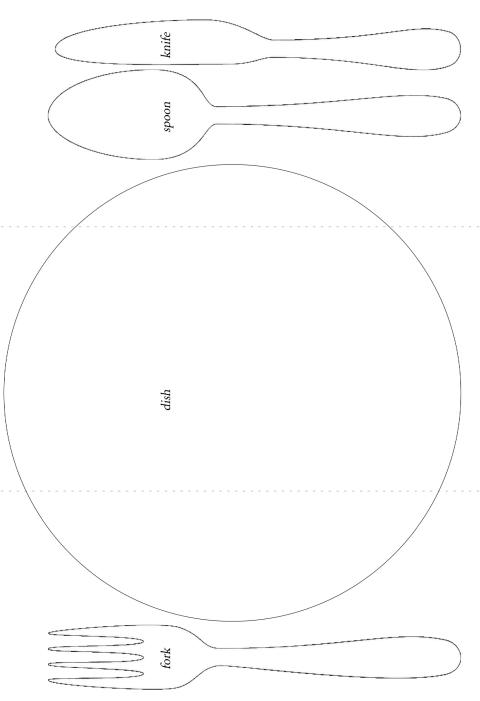
SUGESTIONS TO THE HOST: Boho Dinner-Around the Fire-PicNic-By the Pool-At the Kitchen - Your Restaurant

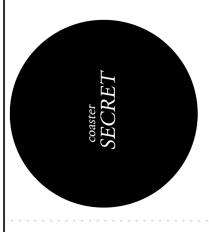
napkin MEMORY

Write Down on a Napkin a Memory about the most dangerous trouble tha Francis got:

- * When your Music Play, you may share your Memory with other guests.
- * If you Mayke a Toast, after you finished, you may grab some of the napkins on the table,

and read the Memory os someone.





Write down on your Coaster a Secret that only you know about the romantic life of Francis:

- * If you Make a Toast, the guest sitting next to you can peek at your Secret
 - * If someone next to you Make a Toast, you can peek theirs.

RULES OF ETIQUETTE

What do you have to do:

Before the game

- make it, buy something cheap, or even give something yours. Just don't * Choose a symbolic gift to Francis leave with it as a Sounevir (You can forget to bring with you, to the dinner.
 - * Send to the Spouse some sugestion of a song, to build the playlist
 - * Remeber to confirm your presence and bring your Invitation with you.

One hour before the game

- * Put on the table, at a place defined by the Host, your Souvenir for
- * Write the most meaningful Memory you have about Francis in a

Napkin;

- * Write the Secret you have about Francis on the Coaster;
- * Think and memorize what is the real Fate that Francis will meet.

During the game

- * If your Song play, you may tell your Memory;
- "What You Want" on their sheet, and why does they want this. They will * If someone Touches you, you can ask them, as a character, what is the answer you honestly.
- * If someone ask you to Pass Something (salt, butter, cutlery...), ask them discreetly what they belive to be the real Fate of Francis;
- that you find meaningful about this meeting, opening your soul. As long * If you decide to make a monologue, start Making a Toast to something as the music that is playing is still on, you can talk about whatever you want, and nobody will interrupt you. In the mean time, the guests by your side can peek at your Secret. At the end of your Toast, you can grab any Napkin on the table. (You just talked to much, and need to dry your
- * Whenever if feel sincere, make a Compliment about someone's Role.

THIS FOLKS AT THE DINING ROOM

A bittersweet dinner larp about tastes and goodbyes

close and finding out why Francis is so dear to us. We don't know even where or why Francis is leaving, nor for Francis is leaving... ...and invited us to a farewell dinner. We are the closest persons to Francis: parents, relatives, friends or spouse, and we don't know each other very well. Francis is going to be late, about an hour, but we don't know this yet. So we will use this time to know each other better, getting

Dear

how long... Maybe we'll find out at the dinner.

FACTS

school, to the asylum, to the prision and even Francis No one knows what is about to happen with Francis: it can be a terminal illness, leaving in vacation, running away from some tough mess, going to war, to a board could be just lying...

the characters gender (if participant wishes to explore No one's gender is defined: Even Francis with a name other genders than their ones) and gender issues at the gender neutral. This ensures that you can explore both

Curiously, nobody knows each other for sure: Francis could said something about a character to another, showed pictures, etc. But the guests never meet eachother in person.

The Relative

loves the most, appealing to the taste of the other guests You are the closest kin of Francis (a parent, a sibling, an Your Role at the Dinner is to cook the meal Francis You Want To get back something realy valuable that once you left with Francis. Think of what it is and and winning compliments for your cooking skills. aunt, a brother in law, foster parent, etc...) memorize it.

What you have to do: Before the game

even give something yours. Just don't forget to bring Sounevir (You can make it, buy something cheap, or Choose a symbolic gift to Francis leave with it as a with you, to the dinner. Send to the Spouse some sugestion of a song, to build the playlist

Remeber to confirm your presence and bring your Invitation with you.

ಡ f o r n s j o i n Please

FAREWELL DINNER

for our beloved Francis.

date:

adress:

elative

YOU ARE the closest kin of Francis (a parent, a sibling, an aunt, a brother in law, foster parent, etc...)

YOUR ROLE AT THE DINNER iis to cook the meal Francis loves the most, appealing to the taste of the other guests and winning compliments for your cooking skills YOU WANT TO get back something realy valuable that once you left with Francis. Think of what it is and memorize it.

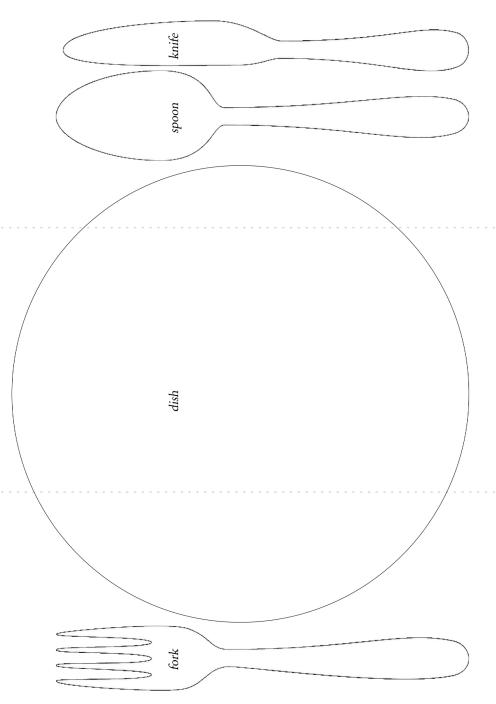
SUGESTIONS TO THE RELATIVE: Fancy Dinner – Snacks – Pizza – Lunch – Barbecue

napkin MEMORY

Write Down on a Napkin the oldest Memory you have of Francis:

- * When your Music Play, you may share your Memory with other guests.
- * If you Mayke a Toast, after you finished, you may grab some of the napkins on the table,

and read the Memory os someone.





Write down on your Coaster a Secret that only you know about why it's a aweful idea Francis leave right now::

- * If you Make a Toast, the guest sitting next to you can peek at your Secret
- * If someone next to you Make a Toast, you can peek theirs.

RULES OF ETIQUETTE

What do you have to do:

Before the game

- make it, buy something cheap, or even give something yours. Just don't * Choose a symbolic gift to Francis leave with it as a Sounevir (You can forget to bring with you, to the dinner.
 - * Send to the Spouse some sugestion of a song, to build the playlist
 - * Remeber to confirm your presence and bring your Invitation with you.

One hour before the game

- * Put on the table, at a place defined by the Host, your Souvenir for
- * Write the most meaningful Memory you have about Francis in a Napkin;
- * Write the Secret you have about Francis on the Coaster;
- * Think and memorize what is the real Fate that Francis will meet.

During the game

- * If your Song play, you may tell your Memory;
- "What You Want" on their sheet, and why does they want this. They will * If someone Touches you, you can ask them, as a character, what is the answer you honestly.
- * If someone ask you to Pass Something (salt, butter, cutlery...), ask them discreetly what they belive to be the real Fate of Francis;
- that you find meaningful about this meeting, opening your soul. As long * If you decide to make a monologue, start Making a Toast to something as the music that is playing is still on, you can talk about whatever you want, and nobody will interrupt you. In the mean time, the guests by your side can peek at your Secret. At the end of your Toast, you can grab any Napkin on the table. (You just talked to much, and need to dry your
- * Whenever if feel sincere, make a Compliment about someone's Role.

THIS FOLKS AT THE DINING ROOM

A bittersweet dinner larp about tastes and goodbyes

close and finding out why Francis is so dear to us. We don't know even where or why Francis is leaving, nor for Francis is leaving... ...and invited us to a farewell dinner. We are the closest persons to Francis: parents, relatives, friends or spouse, and we don't know each other very well. Francis is going to be late, about an hour, but we don't know this yet. So we will use this time to know each other better, getting how long... Maybe we'll find out at the dinner.

FACTS

No one knows what is about to happen with Francis: it can be a terminal illness, leaving in vacation, running away from some tough mess, going to war, to a board school, to the asylum, to the prision and even Francis could be just lying...

the characters gender (if participant wishes to explore other genders than their ones) and gender issues at the No one's gender is defined: Even Francis with a name gender neutral. This ensures that you can explore both

Curiously, nobody knows each other for sure: Francis could said something about a character to another, showed pictures, etc. But the guests never meet eachother in person.

The Spouse

complements about your relationship (you have to start romantic soundtrack of yours, to set the beginning and musics that Francis loves most pleasing the ears of the and to end the playlist with the most important and other guests (so remeber to include their sugestions dinner making a playlist of one hour long, with the Your Role at the Dinner is to set the mood of the previously sended to you) and to win some You are the romantic partner of Francis. the end of the game).

You Want To change the mind of Francis to prevent the departure. Think about it and memorize it.

What you have to do: Before the game

even give something yours. Just don't forget to bring Sounevir (You can make it, buy something cheap, or Choose a symbolic gift to Francis leave with it as a with you, to the dinner. Choose the song most important in your relationship with Francis, to build the playlist

Remeber to confirm your presence and bring your

Dear

ಡ f o r n s j o i n Please

FAREWELL

DINNER

for our beloved Francis.

date:

adress:

onse

YOU ARE the romantic partner of Francis.

YOUR ROLE AT THE DINNER is to set the mood of the dinner making a playlist of one hour long, with the musics that Francis loves most pleasing the ears of the other guests (so remeber to include their sugestions previously sended to you) and to win some complements about your relationship (you have to start and to end the playlist with the most important and romantic yours, to set the beginning and the end of the game)

YOU WANT TO change the mind of Francis to prevent the departure. Think about it and

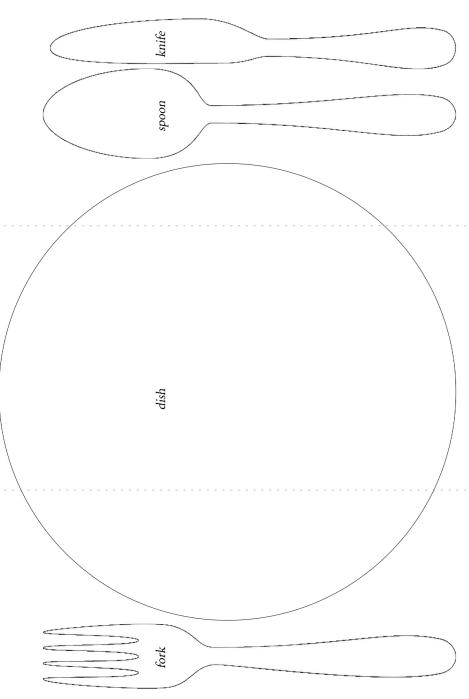
SUGESTIONS TO THE SPOUSE: LP's – K7 – CD's – Some music App

napkin MEMORY

Write Down on a Napkin a Memory of the most sad experience you lived beside Francis:

- * When your Music Play, you may share your Memory with other guests.
- * If you Mayke a Toast, after you finished, you may grab some of the napkins on the table,

and read the Memory os someone.





about something that is realy valuable that Francis is caring Write down on your Coaster a Secret that only you know in the departure:

- * If you Make a Toast, the guest sitting next to you can peek at your Secret
 - * If someone next to you Make a Toast, you can peek theirs.

RULES OF ETIQUETTE

What do you have to do:

Before the game

- * Choose a symbolic gift to Francis leave with it as a Sounevir (You can make it, buy something cheap, or even give something yours. Just don't forget to bring with you, to the dinner.
 - * Choose the song most important in your relationship with Francis, to build the playlist
- * Remeber to confirm your presence and bring your Invitation with you.

One hour before the game

- * Put on the table, at a place defined by the Host, your Souvenir for
- * Write the most meaningful Memory you have about Francis in a Napkin;
 - * Write the Secret you have about Francis on the Coaster;
 - * Think and memorize what is the real Fate that Francis will meet.

During the game

- * If your Song play, you may tell your Memory;
- "What You Want" on their sheet, and why does they want this. They will * If someone Touches you, you can ask them, as a character, what is the answer you honestly.
- * If someone ask you to Pass Something (salt, butter, cutlery...), ask them discreetly what they belive to be the real Fate of Francis;
- * If you decide to make a monologue, start Making a Toast to something that you find meaningful about this meeting, opening your soul. As long as the music that is playing is still on, you can talk about whatever you want, and nobody will interrupt you. In the mean time, the guests by your side can peek at your Secret. At the end of your Toast, you can grab any Napkin on the table. (You just talked to much, and need to dry your
- * Whenever if feel sincere, make a Compliment about someone's Role.

TOGETHER BY EVA SCHIFFER

A game about romance and agency for two players who have never been in a real-life romantic relationship with each other.

Together

A two player LARP by Eva Schiffer



This is a game about romance and agency for two players who have never been in a real-life romantic relationship with each other. You can optionally play this game with a GM who will facilitate the initial workshop, but if nobody is around to facilitate you can manage without.

The game will take about an hour and a half. Ideally you should play this game with someone you find potentially romantically attractive.

You will need a clear space about 5 feet square with good traction on level ground and an audible timer to time the scenes. You may also want some place to sit down for the debrief at the end of the game. Players will need be able to stand, competitively test their balance, and touch the other player's hands and forearms.

If you can only carry on a conversation when your hands are free, the mechanics of this game probably won't work for you. If you have difficulties seeing or reading other people's body language when standing near them, this game may not work well for you.

Game Structure

The game is made up of one 15 minute workshop, six 5 to 10 minute in-character conversation scenes, and one 15 minute debrief. Each of the conversation scenes has two scene prompts: one for the pursuer and one for the pursued.

Characters and Roles

The players take on the roles of the pursuer and the pursued. If you are playing this game with one woman and one man, the woman will play the pursuer and the man will play the pursued. If you have some other combination of genders, you should decide between yourselves which of you feels they have been the most passive in their real world relationships, this person should play the pursuer and the other player should play the pursued.

The pursuer and pursued will have their own unique scene prompts to read for each of the scenes in the game. They will both use the mechanics for conversations given below.

Each player should choose a given name for their character that is not their real life name and share it with the other player. Ask the other player if there are any general relationship themes or issues they would rather you did **not** incorporate in the game. Do your best to avoid these topics. If you find yourself slipping, call a time-out and make sure they are ok with where things are going (if not, rewind and try again).

During the game each player should feel free to make up anything about their own character that is not described in the scene prompts: hobbies, backstory, emotional reactions, or self justifications are all fair game. Try to avoid making up things about the other player's character, instead ask them in-character about things that you want to know.

Conversation Mechanics and Workshop

There are two kinds of conversation in this game: cooperative and confrontational. All conversations are carried out with the players standing, facing each other at a comfortable distance where they can reach each other's arms. This is probably closer than you stand to talk to strangers and acquaintances, but you should still be far enough apart to see the other person's face and shoulders clearly.

The game includes scenes that are cooperative and scenes that are confrontational. Your scene prompts will tell you the conversation type for that scene as well as how long it will be. All scenes are timed with an audible timer. Set the timer at the beginning of the scene and then focus on the interaction between your characters, not how much time is left in the scene. When the timer goes off, players should step apart and each player may say one additional sentence in character to close the dialog.

If a player is finding a conversation emotionally or physically overwhelming they should say "time out" and both players should step apart. Take a 5 minute break (pausing your scene timer during the break) and check that both of you want to continue after the break. It is ok to stop the game part way through the conversation scenes because either or both of you do not want to continue. If you stop part way though you should still do the final debrief.

Cooperative Conversations

Cooperative conversations are about exploring the growing bonds and relationship between your characters. Both players should face each other and maintain eye contact. Blinking is fine, just keep your gaze on the other player's eyes and face as best you can.

The pursuer should hold their hands out in front of them with their elbows bent and their palms up. The pursued should place their hands on the pursuer's wrists or forearms (with the pursued's palms face down) so that their wrists or forearms fall in the pursuer's hands. Hold the other player's arms, gripping them lightly in your hands.

Confrontational Conversations

The core of confrontational conversations is a physical balance game. The players should stand a comfortable distance apart and hold their hands up with the palms touching the other player's palms. You will want to stand with your feet a little further apart than your regular posture (shoot for roughly as far apart as your shoulders) and keep your center of gravity low.

During a confrontational conversation players should speak as they normally would. They may physically interact only by pushing on each other's palms. You should be pushing with your

arms, not the weight of your body, so try to keep your shoulders from moving forward or back. The goal of the pushing is to push the other player off balance so they are forced to lift one of their feet and take a step. You do not want to knock anyone over or hurt anyone, so please be careful and do your best to gauge the other player's strength and balance. It's a good idea to clear the nearby area of anything hazardous or breakable that you could stagger into just in case.

While having a confrontational conversation, you should push on the other player's hands when you are frustrated or angry about their behavior or arguments. If a player is pushed off balance and takes a step, both players should let go of each other and the off balance player should briefly conceed some point about reality or admit some fault in the argument. Things like "I shouldn't have X" or "I can't Y, even though I understand that it's important to you" are appropriate. If both players lose their balance at the same time, only players who stepped forward (towards the other player) must concede or admit something. Then return to the original confrontational conversation position and continue the conversation.

Workshop

Once the players understand the idea of how conversations work, they should try having one brief confrontational conversation and one brief cooperative conversation. The prompts to use for these practice conversations are on the first pages of the pursuer's and the pursued's scene prompt booklets.

These are *practice conversations*, so whatever occurs in them is not relevant to the rest of the game. Address each other by your character names so that you will be more used to saying and responding to those names.

If you have a GM helping you, they will demonstrate postures and answer any questions about the conversation mechanics. After the workshop a GM can observe the game from a distance if they wish and help facilitate the final debrief, but this is not required.

A Note About Gaslighting

Wikipedia defines gaslighting as "a form of mental abuse in which information is twisted or spun, selectively omitted to favor the abuser, or false information is presented with the intent of making victims doubt their own memory, perception, and sanity." (For more details and the history of the term: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaslighting)

Gaslighting has a unique relationship with tabletop RPGs, freeforms, and LARPs because so much of reality is determined by GM fiat and player improvisation. Reality is very fluid in roleplaying games, which unfortunately makes it easy to accidentally gaslight other players by improvising a reality that does not match theirs.

This game is not about abusive relationships and it's definitely not meant to be about gaslighting a lover. So please do your best to accept the reality the other player presents to you. It's ok if your characters interpreted the same events differently ("you abandoned me at the party without a word" vs "my car broke down and my phone died so I couldn't call you" for example) but if one of you says something like "I was at the concert but I couldn't find you!" both of you should behave as if they are telling the truth. Possibly something else went wrong, like they forgot the spot you had arranged to meet or you forgot to wear your green sweater so they could find you. You should muddle the full story out together during play.

TLDR version: Do not lie in this game to make your character look better. When you make things up accept that whatever the other player told you was the truth, even if it's not the *whole* truth.

Debrief

The debrief allows both players to relax and decompress their thoughts about the intense interpersonal experience they shared. You should spend about 15 minutes on the debrief, but if you have more you need to talk about and the time, you can spend longer on it.

The Debrief has two parts. In the first part the players should take turns telling each other about parts of the game that they found intense, disturbing, or that sparked strong reactions because of their personal history. The other player should ask questions about the experience and try to make sure that their partner is going to be emotionally ok. The pursuer should start with the first observation.

The second part of the debrief is positive affirmation. The players should take turns saying things they liked about the other player's choices, improvisations, and interpretation of their character. You may not respond to these complements, simply reply with something you liked about the other player. Try to come up with at least 5 positive statements each and not more than 8.

If the positive affirmation shakes out anything else that you want to talk about, once the affirmation is done, take a minute or two to discuss it.

If a GM is present they can help guide you through the stages of the debrief and prompt both players by asking additional questions about their experience and perceptions. If possible the GM should also check back with the players later (in a few hours or the next day) to make sure they don't have any lingering things they need to talk about.

Scene Prompts

The pursuer and pursued each get their own booklet of prompts. Prompts are labeled with the scene title, which player the prompt is for, the type of conversation, and the length of the scene. A prompt contains some thoughts and history for your character that will help to set the scene.

Some prompts also contain *meta instructions* in italics. Meta instructions are instructions for the player that will help to give structure and direction to the scenes. Try to follow the meta instructions the best you can.

At the beginning of a scene, each player should take a minute to read their prompt and remember the important details. Do not read ahead, only read the prompt for the next scene. You will not be able to refer to your booklet easily during a scene. If you totally blank on something important you can call a time-out, but try not to do this unless you must.

About

This game was written for the 2015 Golden Cobra Challenge (
http://www.goldencobra.org/index.html). The mechanics were inspired by a balance game I learned while taking Tai Chi many years ago. I like this balance game because it tends to favor shorter people with a lower center of gravity (on average, it more often favors women). I was hoping to create mechanics that would let two people feel the intensity of a romantic bond and the frustration that results from one partner having more agency than the other, even though the players have no romantic history with each other.

If the game is well received I hope I'll be able to write better sets of prompts to allow players to explore different relationship dynamics. I would also like to consider making player choices relevant to which prompts you use later in the game, in the same style the LARP *A Garden of Forking Paths* does.

The *Handshake* icon used on the cover of this game is by Marianna Nardella and can be found on the Project Noun website (https://thenounproject.com/search/?q=holding+hands&i=32239).

Print the booklet single or double sided. Cut the pages into horizontal sets of two pages. Stack them up so the page numbers in the upper corners are in order and staple bind in the center.

back cover Pursued Scene Prompts **Booklet** 8 Choices, Scene 6, Pursued **Workshop Conversation A, Pursued** (Confrontational; 10 minutes): You've been (Confrontational; 2 minutes): Bears are dating pursuer for two years now... and amazing predators. They're far more durable things have started to get a bit, well stale. and tenacious than most other apex You still love them, but you're increasingly predators, and they're omnivorous to boot. A bear would probably win a fight with just hurt that they don't want to commit to a about every other predator, even a shark. It lifelong relationship with you. Meta: You may might be fun to discuss how such a fight not ask pursuer to marry you, but you would go with the pursuer. desperately want them to ask you.

	T
2	7
Workshop Conversation B, Pursued (Cooperative; 2 minutes): You're curious what the pursuer's favorite foods are. Maybe they have some of the same favorite foods as you? Meta: If the pursuer mentions liking any foods that you find gross, try to get them to tell you why they like them.	Little Things Adding Up, Scene 5, Pursued (Confrontational; 8 minutes): You've been dating pursuer for a year. They've been very busy with work deadlines the last few weeks and you are feeling anxious about the relationship. Of course they need to put work first sometimes, but don't they have any time for you? You're supposed to be having dinner together tonight and they are already 15 minutes late Meta: Get the pursuer to promise to spend more time with you. If possible also get them to tell you how important your relationship is to them.

Movie Night, Scene 4, Pursued (Cooperative; 10 minutes): You and pursuer have been dating for 10 months now and you have a weekly movie night date. Tonight you're planning to stay in and choose a fun scary movie to watch together. Meta: Share your favorite movies with pursuer and learn about what they like. Let them know how much you love them and how glad you are that you have these times together.

Introductory Date, Scene 1, Pursued (Cooperative; 5 minutes): Pursuer asked you out on a date. You've just finished dinner and are heading to a movie soon. They seem nice enough but you've only been casual acquaintances up till now. Meta: Try to find out as much as you can about the pursuer so you can decide how compatible you are with them.

First Month-i-versary, Scene 2, Pursued (Cooperative; 8 minutes): It's the one month anniversary of your first date with pursuer and you've been out on several nice dates. They asked you over for a home cooked dinner tonight. Meta: You are starting to fall for pursuer, but haven't yet made up your mind about the relationship.

Moving Debate, Scene 3, Pursued (Confrontational; 6 minutes): You and pursuer have been dating for six months now and are very much in love. Unfortunately your roommate has just screwed you over by moving out without any notice. Your lease is up at the end of the month and you're really hoping pursuer will be willing to move in with you so you don't have to find a smaller place. Meta: Try to convince the pursuer to move in with you.

Print the booklet single or double sided. Cut the pages into horizontal sets of two pages. Stack them up so the page numbers in the upper corners are in order and staple bind in the center.

them up so the page numbers in the upper corners are in order and staple bind in the center.

Pursuer Scene Prompts Booklet

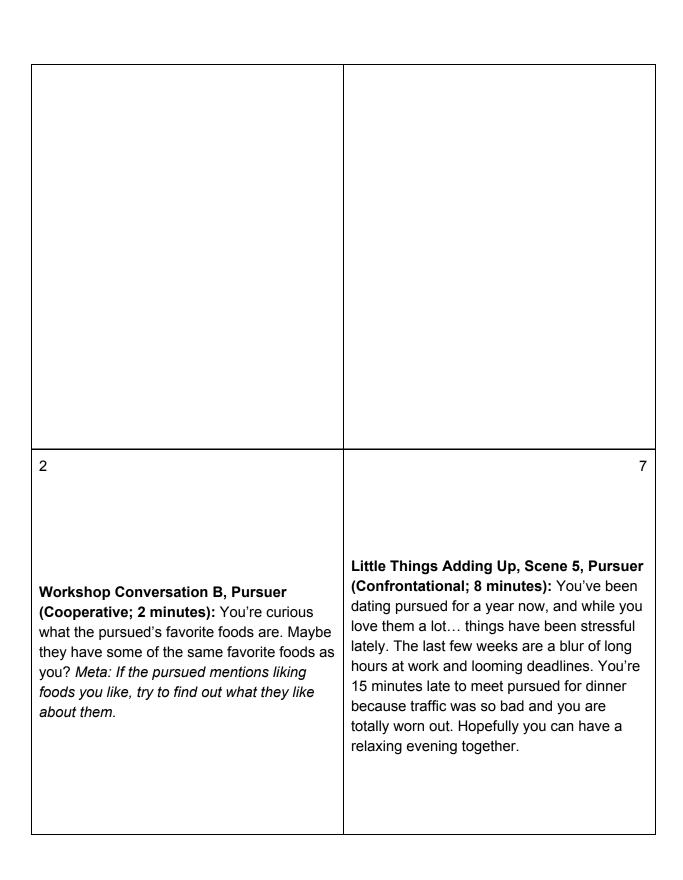
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Choices, Scene 6, Pursuer

back cover

(Confrontational; 10 minutes): You've been dating pursued for two years now, and you're starting to get a bit scared. They are still amazing and you're still wildly in love with them... but you can tell that they are beginning to balk at the fact that you haven't asked them to marry you. It's not that you don't want to get married... it's just that you really want to get this right. How can you tell that this is the right choice? What if things go terribly and the relationship falls apart after you say "I do?" Meta: You are afraid to make a choice. Take your time and get pursued to assuage your fears before you decide.

Workshop Conversation A, Pursuer (Confrontational; 2 minutes): Sharks sure are awesome, they're the apex predators of the ocean and have been around for millions of years. You're pretty sure a shark would win a fight with just about any other predator, even a bear. You should talk about how such an awesome fight would go with the pursued.



6 3

Movie Night, Scene 4, Pursuer (Cooperative; 10 minutes): You and pursued have been dating for 10 months and you have a weekly movie night date. Tonight you're planning to stay in and choose a fun scary movie to watch together. Meta: You couldn't care less what you watch as long as you spend time together.

Introductory Date, Scene 1, Pursuer (Cooperative; 5 minutes): After weeks of trying to get your nerve up, you asked pursued out on a date! Things are going well so far (you had a nice dinner and are heading to a movie soon). You're dazzled by how attractive and vibrant they are and hope they're willing to go out with you again.

First Month-i-versary, Scene 2, Pursuer (Cooperative; 8 minutes): It's the one month anniversary of your first date with pursued and things are going well so far. You've asked them over to your place for a home cooked meal and you're pulling out all the stops to make it fancy and romantic. Meta: Try to get the pursued to agree to an exclusive relationship.

Moving Debate, Scene 3, Pursuer (Confrontational; 6 minutes): You and pursued have been dating for six months now and you are very much in love with them. They've been hinting for a while that they'd like to be more serious but you are feeling unsure. What if things go badly? You're not sure you could stand the heartbreak. Meta: You haven't decided for or against anything, but you want to be sure before you make any big decisions. Make the pursued justify any changes they want to you to your satisfaction.

THE TONGUES OF OUR ANCESTORS

BY MO HOLKAR

When a nation is conquered, will its language survive? Play out scenes down the generations to find out: will the tongues of our ancestors still speak in the mouths of our grandchildren?

The Tongues of Our Ancestors

By Mo Holkar for the Golden Cobra Challenge 2015. Draft v0.2 20151026

A freeform role-playing game for four people. Play time: two hours.

Introduction	2
Conquering tongues	2
In the game	2
Requirements	3
Setup	3
Introduce yourselves	3
Agree the setting	4
Define the conquerors and the conquered	
Generations	5
Language skills	5
Defining the characters	6
Take your beads	7
Scenelets	7
Which Scenelets get played?	7
What's the order of Scenelets?	7
What's in a Scenelet?	7
Lighting Scenelets	
Mixing	8
At the end of each Generation	8
Choose characters	9
How long has passed?	9
Answer your questions	9
What do the language skills mean?	9
What about the last Generation of the game?	
Prologue and Epilogue	10
Acknowledgements	
Game materials	
Mixing table	11
Character cards	
First Chooser marker	16

Introduction

The Tongues of Our Ancestors is a game about conquered peoples. It looks at the different fates that may befall the cultures and traditions of people who are conquered by a more powerful nation, focusing specifically on language as an example and representative of the indigenous culture in general.

"Words were power, words tried to change you, to shape bridges of longing that no one could ever really cross [...] Tigana, let my memory of you be like a blade in my soul."

Tigana, Guy Gavriel Kay

Conquering tongues

It's no coincidence that conquering powers have often sought to suppress or exterminate the language of the people who they overcome; or that, in later times, bemusement or ridicule is a common reaction when folk attempt to revive their language as part of a distinct cultural heritage. The hope seems to be that removal of a language makes the expression of an identity other than 'subject of the conqueror' literally unthinkable. But history shows that these tongues of our ancestors sometimes have the power to speak on down the generations...

- After the Spanish conquest of Mexico, in 1570 CE Nahuatl (the tongue of the Aztecs) was declared by the Spanish monarch as the colony's official language. But during the 20th century, governments insisted on the use of Spanish, and Nahuatl was marginalized. Today, not much more than a percent of Mexicans speak Nahuatl, and it's the primary language for only a tenth of those.
- The Chinese annexation of Tibet has seen the Tibetan language maintained with official status, and it's the main language used in schools. Chinese has penetrated only the upper echelons. However, use of Tibetan among those who fled the country into India is in danger, with Hindi and English taking over.
- Greenland was colonized by Denmark from the 1700s CE onwards, and the native Greenlandic language repressed in favour of Danish. Since home rule in 1979 CE, Greenlandic has been revived and is now the sole official language of the territory, with Danish reduced (officially) to minor status. The Greenlandic version of Norse, used by earlier Viking settlers, died out completely prior to the modern colonization.
- The Mozarabic group of languages, descended from Latin, were used in southern Spain under Moorish rule up into the 14th century CE. Conquest by the Catholic Monarchs extinguished them in favour of the language then known as Castilian, now Spanish.

In the game

When you play **The Tongues of Our Ancestors**, you will be in the position of people on different sides of the conqueror/conquered barrier, at different periods as the history of the

conquest develops. The fate of the conquered tongue will be in your hands. Will it still have meaning to its descendants? It's for you to determine.

Requirements

At the minimum you need:

- Four people, at least one of whom has read these instructions and so can facilitate play.
- A room or other space to move around in.
- Pens, paper, index cards; or a whiteboard or similar; for making notes.
- 12 beads in each of two different colours, or other such tokens. Put these in a pool
 where everyone can reach them.
- A small opaque drawstring bag, or something similar.
- A six-sided die, or other such randomizing device.

Ideally you would also have:

- Another four small opaque drawstring bags.
- Control over mood lighting.
- Seclusion.

... but you can get by without those.

Setup

Introduce yourselves

Each player, in turn, say who you are, the pronouns that you prefer to use, and a little about yourself. Say which language (or languages) you consider to be your own native tongue, and where you were living when you learnt it. Do you know if any other language has ever been native there? Were there earlier languages that were, or still are, spoken there? If they're not spoken any more, how recently did they die out, and how did it happen? Have there been attempts to revive dead or dying languages? What about in your family: did your own ancestors speak another language that has, or hasn't, been passed down to you? Share anything interesting from these reflections with the other players.

Hi, I'm Mo: I prefer the pronouns he, him, his. I'm a game designer by profession; a long-time role-player just getting into freeform in the last couple of years; and I'm also interested in historical linguistics. I speak British English natively, and have always lived in England. English of one kind or another has been the dominant language here since the Anglo-Saxon occupation of the 5th century CE, when it displaced Celtic tongues. But subsequent conquest by the Normans in the 11th century CE did not displace English as the dominant tongue of England: the rulers eventually abandoned their own Norman French, and started speaking English like their subjects.

My father is from India, and as well as English he speaks Hindi and Marathi natively, plus bits of Gujarati. But my siblings and I don't speak any of these Indian languages at all.

Agree the setting

First of all you have to decide, as a group, on the setting for your game. The basis is that a capable and effective power has conquered a weaker nation. Population from the conquerors has moved in, and they are administering the conquered territory. Peace has been established, and any resistance is confined to resentment. The conquerors are more advanced technologically, and (in their own minds at least) socially and culturally. And, most importantly: the conquerors speak a different language to the conquered. Options include, but are not limited to:

- historical (eg. Romans conquering Gaul);
- para-historical (eg. Macedonians conquering Rome);
- established fantasy (eg. Saruman conquering the Shire);
- para-fantasy (eg. the Wicked Witch of the West conquering Munchkin County);
- your own fantasy (eg. a clan of sorcerers conquering a province of fisherfolk);
- established science fiction (eg. Cardassians conquering Bajor);
- para-science fiction (eg. the Galactic Empire conquering the moon Endor);
- your own science fiction (eg. small furry creatures from Alpha Centauri conquering large bald creatures from Beta Centauri);
- ... etc.

The main thing is that all four of you should agree and be happy to play in this particular setting.

Define the conquerors and the conquered

Going around the four of you, each in turn answer one of these questions below. Just say whatever comes into your head and sounds plausible – it isn't important to get hung up on detail or on historical accuracy or whatever. Be as literal or as poetic/impressionistic as you wish. If one of the other players doesn't like what you've said, they can ask you to change it. Make a note of all the agreed answers on index cards, so you can all refer to them during play.

Some of these questions won't be relevant in some types of setting: skip them if so. And add any further questions that you think are relevant to your setting.

The **Conquered**:

- What are they called?
- What's their language called?
- What does it sound like?
- What sort of lives do they lead?
- How do they bring up their young?
- What would they probably have gone on to do, if they hadn't been conquered?

The **Conquerors**:

What are they called?

- What's their language called?
- What does it sound like?
- What are their strengths?
- What are their weaknesses?
- What is their vision of the future?

It's important to remember, as you play through the game, that the conquest is complete and irrevocable. If there was resistance, it was put down quickly and effectively. There is no chance of successful rebellion – no prospect of freedom. That is not an element in this game. If the conquered people want to resist cultural assimilation, they will have to find subtle ways of preserving their identity via language. But they may not wish to, instead preferring to merge into the conqueror population: that's also completely fair and possible.

Also remember that, although for convenience these instructions refer to the conquered people as 'natives', they might have once been conquerors themselves — who absorbed or assimilated an earlier group of people who were living there before. This pattern of successive waves of conquest and absorption is very common in history.

Generations

The Tongues of Our Ancestors takes place through four 'Generations'. Depending on the setting, these might be literal generations – the people who were conquered, then their children, then their grandchildren, then their great-grandchildren – or, more likely in more modern/futuristic settings, each Generation represents a longer period of decades or even centuries. It's long enough for there to have been a significant change in the usage of the two languages.

The first Generation is immediately after the conquest: the other three are successively later. In each Generation a set of four representative characters will play out a series of Scenelets, and what happens in these will determine the fate of the language in the next Generation. (See below for more detail about what Scenelets involve.)

The four roles are as follows:

- Generation 1: Ruler, Trader, Producer, Homekeeper.
- Generation 2: Governor, Administrator, Thinker, Doer
- Generation 3: Legislator, Professional, Teacher, Student
- Generation 4: not defined in advance you will decide who they are when you reach this point

In each Generation, each of you will play one of these four roles. You will make up the details of the characters as required by your setting — so the Ruler might be Julius Caesar, or General Charles Gordon, or Hazel the rabbit, etc. — but basically they will be the leader of the occupying forces. And likewise for the other roles.

Language skills

Each of the four characters is partly defined by their relative command of the two languages – the language of the Conquerors, and the language of the Conquered. For convenience in these instructions we'll call them NewTongue and OldTongue respectively: in your game they might be English and Welsh, or Danish and Greenlandic, or Quenya and Sindarin – whatever you've set up.

An individual's proficiency in a particular language is defined as follows:

- 0 = no knowledge at all;
- 1 = a smattering;
- 2 = enough to get by;
- 3 =fluency.

In Generation 1, the four characters have the following language skills:

- Ruler: NewTongue 3, OldTongue 0;
- Trader: NewTongue 3, OldTongue 1;
- Producer: NewTongue 1, OldTongue 3;
- Homekeeper: NewTongue 0, OldTongue 3;

Two characters can communicate if they both have language skills of at least 2 in one of the two languages, or if they both have at least 1 in both languages. If it's less than that, they don't have enough language in common to be able to communicate with each other.

Someone with language skills of:	can communicate with someone with language skills of:
3/0	3/0, 3/1, 3/2, 2/3
3/1	3/0, 3/1, 3/2, 2/3, 1/3
3/2	3/0, 3/1, 3/2, 2/3, 1/3, 0/3
2/3	3/0, 3/1, 3/2, 2/3, 1/3, 0/3
1/3	3/1, 3/2, 2/3, 1/3, 0/3
0/3	3/2, 2/3, 1/3, 0/3

So you can see that in Generation 1:

- Ruler (3/0) and Trader (3/1) can communicate with each other;
- Trader (3/1) and Producer (1/3) can communicate with each other;
- Producer (1/3) and Homekeeper (0/3) can communicate with each other;
- ... no other pairs of characters can communicate with each other eg. Trader cannot communicate with Homekeeper.

In subsequent Generations, the four characters that you play will have language skills (and so, will be able to intercommunicate) as determined by your own decisions and by what happens in the current Generation.

Defining the characters

Give the First Chooser marker to the player who speaks the highest number of different languages. They should then choose which one of the four 1st Generation characters they're going to play. The player to their left then chooses one of the remaining three, and so on.

Each character card has a set of questions on it: think about these for a few minutes, and write in the answers that correspond with how you want to play that character. Once everyone's done that, read out your questions and answers to each other.

Take your beads

Each player should now take beads from the pool to correspond with their language skills – eg. if you're using red beads for NewTongue and blue beads for OldTongue, then the player who's chosen the Producer should take one red and three blue beads.

Scenelets

A Scenelet consists of an interaction between two characters. In each Generation, there's the potential for exactly one Scenelet between every pair of two characters who can communicate with each other.

Which Scenelets get played?

So in Generation 1, there will be three Scenelets possible: Ruler and Trader, Trader and Producer, and Producer and Homekeeper – because those are the only three combinations of characters that have sufficient mutual language skills. In subsequent Generations there may be more or fewer Scenelets possible, depending on what language skills the characters have.

By looking at the set of language skills that the four characters have, establish what Scenelets there could be in this Generation that you're about to play, and write them down.

If there are two, three or four Scenelets possible, you'll play through all of them.

If there are five or six Scenelets possible, choose four of them at random, and you'll play through those four — ignore the others. (If it turns out that this way one of the characters isn't going to get to play any Scenelets, or hardly any, then redo the randomization — it's more fun if everyone gets a roughly fair share, but you don't have to be obsessive about it.)

What's the order of Scenelets?

The First Chooser chooses which of the available Scenelets to play first; then the player to their right chooses which one to do next; and so on.

What's in a Scenelet?

The frame and content of a Scenelet is determined by the two players whose characters are not taking part in it. So if in Generation 1 the first Scenelet is chosen to be that between the Homekeeper and the Producer, it's set up by the players of the Ruler and Trader.

First, the one of those two players who's nearest to the left after the First Chooser answers: what is this Scenelet going to be about? The answer here can be as specific or general as you wish. You might say "It's about the meaning of life", or "it's about how long to cook the potatoes for". Pick any topic that you think these two characters might have interesting things to say about that will shed light on the direction of the conquered people and of their language.

Then, the other player answers: where and when does it take place, and what has just happened to prompt it? Again, use your imagination and creativity to find things that will be interesting material for the two players. Don't deliberately try and make it difficult for them – this isn't a competitive game. Draw them a space that will let them make powerful, moving and enlightening patterns.

The two players involved should then stand up and play the Scenelet out, live.

Each Scenelet should last no more than a few minutes — it's up to the two players who aren't playing in it to timekeep. Be ruthless and don't waste time in buildup or in prevaricating — the two of you should aim to come in in the middle of interesting action/conversation, illustrate your characters' positions, say what you want to say, express hopes and frustrations, and end with a punchy conclusion. Think of it as a vignette that shows an outsider what life is like for your two characters as they interact together, and how their respective language skills affect that.

Lighting Scenelets

Depending on what control you have over the lighting in your space, you can create powerful effects as the game progresses. A simple structure might be to light the table during the mixing and character-creation phases, so everyone can see clearly what they're doing; and to light the open area where the two active players are while Scenelets take place.

If you've got access to coloured lighting then highlighting each Scenelet with the mix of the colours that you're using for NewTongue and OldTongue that's appropriate for the two characters involved will be effective. Or, more simply, highlight each Generation with a different colour to give the impression of a significant shift in time between them.

Mixing

After each Scenelet, there is a Mixing. This will contribute to determining the progress or regress of NewTongue and OldTongue in the next Generation.

Each of the two players who took part in the Scenelet should choose two of their beads, without anyone else seeing. They can choose beads of whichever colour(s) they want, if they have both colours available. The choice should be based on what took place during the Scenelet, and how they see that dialogue between the two characters shaping the future direction of the conqueror/conquered society. So, for example, if it seems from that Scenelet like the conquerors are going to be pushing hard at culturally suppressing the conquered people, then it would make sense to choose two beads of the NewTongue colour – if you have them. Then both secretly place their choices into a central bag.

The player who asked the question that began the Scenelet now draws beads from the bag, one by one, until either (a) they've drawn three beads of one colour, or (b) they've drawn all four beads and found them to be two of each colour. In case (b) each of the two players involved in the Scenelet secretly puts one more bead into the bag, and the drawing player then draws one more bead from it.

The drawing player counts up the beads that they have drawn (it should come to three of one colour and 0, 1 or 2 of the other colour) and writes the totals down in the Mixing Table.

All beads are then returned to the two players who were in the Scenelet.

Then move on to play the next Scenelet, and so on until all the Scenelets to be played in this Generation have been played, with a Mixing carried out after each one.

At the end of each Generation

At the end of each Generation, there will be as many entries in the Mixing Table as there were Scenelets in that Generation – from two to four.

If there are four:	If there are three:	If there are two::
These will be the language skills of the four characters in the next Generation.	Each of the four players should now choose one of their beads and secretly put it in the central bag. One of the players (it doesn't matter which) draws beads from the bag until they either (a) have drawn three the same colour, or (b) have drawn all four beads but found them to be two of each colour. In case (b), all four players secretly put in one more bead, and the drawing player draws one from the bag to add to the four that they previously drew. (They are now guaranteed to have three the same colour.) Write the colours of the total beads they have drawn into the Mixing Table (be 3/0, 3/1, or 3/2): together with the three entries made after each the Scenelet: these will be the language skills of the four characters in the next Generation.	As with the case for three (middle column of this table) except do it twice – returning the beads to their players in between – so as to add two further entries to the Mixing Table.

First of all, all players return all their beads to the pool.

Choose characters

Pass the First Chooser marker to the left. The new First Chooser should choose one of the new characters for the next Generation, choose one of the entries from the Mixing Table to be the language skills for this new character (and strike that entry off the Mixing Table so noone else can also choose it), and take beads from the pool accordingly. The next player to the left does likewise, and so on until each of the four players has a character and a set of language skills and beads.

How long has passed?

Agree together roughly how much time has passed since the previous Generation. If you're playing in historical times, it might be as little as one literal generation – these characters might be the children of the previous lot. In modern or futuristic times, it might be longer – decades, or even centuries. Decide on a period that you're all happy with.

Answer your questions

Each character has a set of questions on its card. You should answer these to yourself, and write in the answers. When you've answered, read the questions and your answers out to the other players, and leave the card face-up so they can refer to it if they wish to. This will allow them to bring interesting elements of your character into the game.

(In Generation 4, the four character types aren't defined like they are in Generations 1–3. You will have to decide what they do, as well as what they're like.)

What do the language skills mean?

Here are some explanations of what different language skills might mean, in terms of the kinds of characters who might have them. You don't have to stick to these, of course – go

with what you think will be interesting to play. Practically any kind of character can be given a particular set of language skills if you think creatively about how they came by them.

NewTongue	OldTongue	What this person might be like
3	0	A member of the conquering elite; or a native-born who has completely assimilated into the conquerors' way of life; etc
3	1	One of the conquerors who has reason to deal with natives, or who maintains an interest in them; or an assimilated native who is nostalgic for the old ways; etc
3	2	A conqueror who works closely with natives and fosters their ways; or someone who's thoroughly interbred but has a strong sense of their native heritage; etc
2	3	A native who's made great efforts to get in well with the new rulers; or has been rigorously forced to learn the new language; or someone of mixed heritage who wants to renounce the deeds of their conqueror forebears; etc
1	3	A native who has to talk with the conquerors as part of their work; or someone who fiercely clings to the old ways, refusing to renounce their heritage; etc
0	3	Someone who has no contact with the conquering people; or who has been brought up in isolation from the new ways; etc

What about the last Generation of the game?

During Generation 4, you should still make entries into the Mixing Table after each Scenelet as normal. But at the end of the Generation, you don't need to create new characters. Instead, this last Mixing Table will be the inspiration for the Epilogue.

Prologue and Epilogue

Starting with the current First Chooser, take it in turns to make short statements about what life was like before the conquest – how the native people lived, how they related to each other, what were their hopes and fears. These are 'out-of-character' statements, as of a historian looking back at the past.

Then go round the circle again speaking as the character who you played in Generation 4. Each make a statement about how you see the future for your land and for its languages. How has the shift in languages (if there was one!) changed the way people think and feel about themselves, how they live?

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Laura Wood and to Abstract Machine and the **Google+ Golden Cobra 2015** community for help getting these thoughts together; and to Laura again for looking the game over and for the Prologue/Epilogue and lots of other great suggestions!

Game materials

Print this section out for use during the game.

Mixing table

(don't cut this up, keep it together as one big table)

Generation	NewTongue	OldTongue	Character
Start of game	3	0	Ruler
	3	1	Trader
	1	3	Producer
	0	3	Homekeeper
Generation 1			
Generation 2			
Generation 3			
Generation 4			

Character cards

(cut these out individually)

Generation 1	Generation 1
Ruler	Trader
NewTongue 3, OldTongue 0	NewTongue 3, OldTongue 1
Name:	Name:
Personality:	Personality:
How did you become ruler?	How well respected are you by your own people, the conquerors?
What are the principles by which you rule?	What do you think of the conquered people?
How do you hope to be remembered?	Are they entitled to the same advantages in trade as your own people?
Generation 1	Generation 1
Producer	Homekeeper
NewTongue 1, OldTongue 3	NewTongue 0, OldTongue 3
Name:	Name:
Personality:	Personality:
What is it that you produce (grow, catch, extract, make, etc)?	How do you feel about the conquerors who have seized your people's land?
Do you feel that you do well out of trading your produce to the conquerors?	How has keeping your home become easier, or harder, since they established rule over you?
How much difference has the conquest made to your life?	What are your hopes for your descendants?

Generation 2	Generation 2
Governor	Administrator
NewTongue, OldTongue	NewTongue, OldTongue
Name:	Name:
Personality:	Personality:
How would you like the people that you govern to think of you?	What do you administer?
How are you viewed by the distant rulers whom you serve?	Do you see yourself as working for, or with, the government? – the people?
What are your ambitions for this land, as a province of the conquering state?	How important is efficiency to you? How important is individual liberty?
_	
Generation 2	Generation 2
Generation 2 Thinker	Generation 2 Doer
Thinker	Doer
Thinker NewTongue, OldTongue	Doer NewTongue, OldTongue
Thinker NewTongue, OldTongue Name:	Doer NewTongue, OldTongue Name:
Thinker NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality:	Doer NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality:

Generation 3	Generation 3
Legislator	Professional
NewTongue, OldTongue	NewTongue, OldTongue
Name:	Name:
Personality:	Personality:
What do you think makes for good laws?	What is your profession?
Do you think the body of laws you work with at the moment is good? – is it practical, effective? What do you want your legacy to be?	How did you get to do that — did you have to qualify, did you have to seek appointment, etc? What are your ambitions — for your profession, for yourself and your descendants?
Generation 3	Generation 3
Generation 3 Teacher	Generation 3 Student
Teacher	Student
Teacher NewTongue, OldTongue	Student NewTongue, OldTongue
Teacher NewTongue, OldTongue Name:	Student NewTongue, OldTongue Name:
Teacher NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality:	Student NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality:

Generation 4	Generation 4
Character 1	Character 2
NewTongue, OldTongue	NewTongue, OldTongue
Name:	Name:
Personality:	Personality:
What is it that you do with your life?	What is it that you do with your life?
Why? – what made you choose that? (Or was	Why? – what made you choose that? (Or was
it forced upon you?)	it forced upon you?)
How do you see the rest of your life shaping	How do you see the rest of your life shaping
up?	up?
Generation 4	Generation 4
Generation 4 Character 3	Generation 4 Character 4
Character 3	Character 4
Character 3 NewTongue, OldTongue	Character 4 NewTongue, OldTongue
Character 3 NewTongue, OldTongue Name:	Character 4 NewTongue, OldTongue Name:
Character 3 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality:	Character 4 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality:
Character 3 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality:	Character 4 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality:
Character 3 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life? Why? – what made you choose that? (Or was	Character 4 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life? Why? – what made you choose that? (Or was
Character 3 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life?	Character 4 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life?
Character 3 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life? Why? – what made you choose that? (Or was it forced upon you?)	Character 4 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life? Why? – what made you choose that? (Or was it forced upon you?)
Character 3 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life? Why? – what made you choose that? (Or was	Character 4 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life? Why? – what made you choose that? (Or was
Character 3 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life? Why? — what made you choose that? (Or was it forced upon you?) How do you see the rest of your life shaping	Character 4 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life? Why? – what made you choose that? (Or was it forced upon you?) How do you see the rest of your life shaping
Character 3 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life? Why? — what made you choose that? (Or was it forced upon you?) How do you see the rest of your life shaping	Character 4 NewTongue, OldTongue Name: Personality: What is it that you do with your life? Why? – what made you choose that? (Or was it forced upon you?) How do you see the rest of your life shaping

First Chooser marker

(cut this out)

I am the First Chooser in this Generation!

I get first choice of which character I want to play, followed by the player to my left, and so on.

Then I get to choose which Scenelet we'll play first, followed by the player to my right, and so on.

TOO MUCH SLAP ON THE ECAF

BY THE COUNTESS DILLYMORE

In 1930s London, queer men encounter each other in public places and find ways to explore their desires.

Too Much Slap On The Ecaf is a bittersweet game about sex, intimacy and forgotten queer identities.



AWARDED FOR BEST INCORPORATION OF PERSPECTIVES OF UNHEARD OR MARGINALIZED PEOPLE OR GROUPS

My dear Matthew,

I hope London is treating you well. The city has rough men, so I hear, but I am sure you know how to handle yourself.

Before you forget me entirely, I wanted to give you something to remember me by. It is a short game for three people. If there are more than three of you, you might either divide into groups to play or occupy yourself in other ways. It will only take an hour or so of your time. I call it

TOO MUCH SLAP ON THE ECAF

It is game about queer men, which I am sure will not shock you. You may, however, have forgotten that these particular queer men existed, and I wanted to remind you.

You need a public space, although, within that space, you will sometimes play in secluded areas, such as bathrooms, unused rooms and dark corners. You should also have one room, which is completely private.

To begin, each choose one of the following characters. They do not have names, for which of us has a real name these days? I have provided costuming instructions for each.

- 1. The Quean: In the day, you work as a labourer, dressed as a man. Deep down, you know you are an invert: a man on the outside, but feminine on the inside, and so attracted to men. You live in a lodging house, where there is little privacy. If you want sex, you must find somewhere you will not be disturbed. You take pride in your effeminacy, flamboyance and outspokenness. You are a familiar sight in London's darker streets and parks, accepted by the working classes, shunned by gentlemen. (Please wear: Make-up. Perfume. Something colourful, flowing and feminine.)
- 2. The Rough Trade: You are a soldier, living in barracks. Like the other soldiers, you have sex with men, either for money or to let you have luxuries you could not get otherwise: a bath, a meal, a night in a soft bed. One day, you hope to meet a girl and marry. If someone called you queer, it would be an insult: you are a man, who has sex, not for pleasure, but for the reward. (Please wear: Working clothes and boots, preferably something that would look out of place wherever you are playing.)
- 3. The Heart In Exile: You are an accountant and consider yourself a homosexual: a man, attracted to men. You live in private rooms on your own. It is a lonely life, broken by occasional sex with men: in particular, working class men, to whom you are attracted and who are attracted to the luxury of your rooms. (Please wear: a shirt and tie, preferably something that looks slightly too formal in the area you are playing and that you would like to take off.)

Before playing, you should talk about how you will handle physical contact and enact sexual activities within the game. It is not likely, I think, that you will handle each other's genitals, at least not during play itself. You might agree to kiss or you might not. However, you should agree to mime sexual activities, even with a minimum of physical contact, since being seen to have sex is an important part of the game.

Whatever you decide, you should practice physical contact and miming sex acts before play, to ensure everyone is comfortable and get them in the mood. You should then practice flirting with each other, first using eye contact, then physical touch.

Once that is over, the game proceeds as follows.

The player with the most beautiful genitalia goes first: those who are too shy to display their genitals may describe them instead.

That player chooses an Early Scene from the following list.

EARLY SCENES

- 1. You were browsing at a book stand. We exchanged glances, then smiles. Did we touch? Did we leave together or go our separate ways?
- 2. As I looked in a shop window, you stopped beside me. I smiled in the window at you. Did we touch? Did we walk together or leave separately?
- 3. At twilight in the park, I offered you a cigarette. Did we touch? Did you leave or did we go deeper into the grass?
- 4. In a urinal, you entered and stood next to me. I looked at you as you pissed, until you returned my gaze. Did we touch? Did you leave after pissing or come into a stall with me?
- 5. In the gangway of a cinema, you stood behind me. I moved closer. Did we touch? Did you allow me to pleasure you or move away?
- 6. Passing me on a street corner at night, you glanced back and I knew what you wanted. I stared until you turned around. Did we touch? Did you go on walking or come to me?
- 7. You saw me watching you as you entered the theatre bar. You came to stand by me at the bar. Did we touch? Did we talk or leave?
- 8. In the bathhouse, I pushed my cock towards you. Did we touch? Did I pleasure you or leave you wanting more?

The player reads the description aloud, then selects one of the other two players with whom to play the scene.

That pair then play the scene as their characters. When they are not touching, they play in silence, but they may talk when they touch. They must not be touching when the scene starts.

Only The Heart in Exile may set up a scene in the private room. All other scenes must be played out in public.

While playing the scene, the players must resolve the two questions that appear in the description of each scene. The first question is always "Did they touch?" or a close equivalent. The second question gives a choice about what happens in the scene.

The scene should last no more than two or three minutes.

When it is over, someone else chooses another scene. This scene - and all other scenes from now onwards - may be either an Introduction Scene or, if the two characters have already played an Introduction Scene, one of the following Later Scenes.

LATER SCENES

- 1. At the club, we let the music move us. Did we touch as we danced? Did we kiss afterwards or break apart?
- 2. When we were alone, I took my cock out, hoping you would like it. Did you touch it?

Did you pleasure me or threaten me?

- 3. In the darkness, I felt the pull of your body. Did we touch? Did we have sex or did you leave?
- 4. As you bathed, I longed to wash you and feel your skin. Did we touch? Did I leave you or join you in the water?
- 5. As we walked through the streets, I hoped you would kiss me. Did we touch? Did you become angry or loving?
- 6. As you dressed, I admired your body. Did we touch? Did you kiss me goodbye or ask me for money?

When everyone has set up three scenes, the game ends.

I hope that is clear! I especially hope you enjoyed the lists of scenes. I am sure you remember some of them, from our time together and with others.

Some final words of advice. Firstly, to have sex in a scene, you might prefer to find somewhere you cannot be observed, even if it is within a public space.

Secondly, you should think about the gender and preferences of whomever you will invite to play. An all-male group will have a different experience than a mixed group, while a queer group will have a different experience than a straight group. I am tempted to mandate that all who play must have penises, but that does seem rather exclusive, so I will leave it to your discretion. If you do permit those with different types of genitals to play, then, when starting the game and discussing who has the most beautiful genitalia, you are forbidden from simply declaring that vaginas are more beautiful than penises or vice versa: that would omit an important and pleasurable conversation. In any case, you must not assume that gender, preference and genitalia do not matter. We know very well that they do.

Thirdly, if there are more than three of you, you might trying adding another Quean or Rough Trade to the mix. I have not tried this myself, since two others is quite enough for me, but do try it and let me know all the details.

And a final comment, which may be superfluous, but that has never stopped me before, as you know well. You may feel, while playing this game, that it is frustrating not to be able to speak of your attraction, embarrassing to touch in public and shameful to play in dark corners. But, yes, I was right, this is superfluous, and I am sure you understand as you always did.

Yours with more affection than I can express

Mu

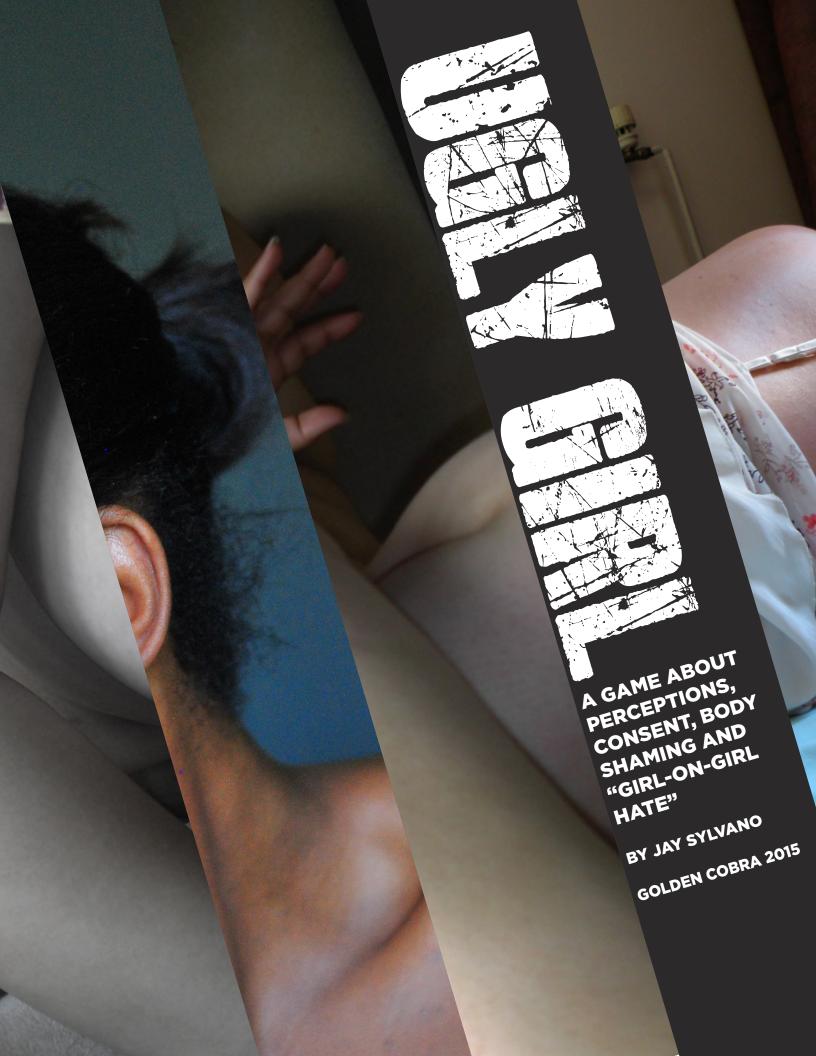
The Countess Dillymore

GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

UGLY GIRL BY JAY SYLVANO

Would you undergo radical physical transformation for the sake of others and how they treat you?

This game means to highlight some of the many significant and veiled cruelties faced by women who do not meet conventional beauty standards within society, the manner in which society sexualizes and consumes the women who do, and the ways in which women are pitted against each other to gain recognition from others based on their appearance.



A GAME ABOUT PERCEPTIONS, CONSENT, BODY SHAMING AND "GIRL-ON-GIRL HATE"

This is a short, player-run larp for four participants about a woman who undergoes radical physical transformation for the sake of others.





"Any woman who chooses to behave like a full human being should be warned that the armies of the status quo will treat her as something of a dirty joke . . . She will need her sisterhood."

- Gloria Steinem

BY JAY SYLVANO GOLDEN COBRA 2015

INTRODUCTION

TO PLAY YOU WILL NEED:

- Roughly 2 hours
- 4 participants
- A copy of this text
- Pens or pencils for each participant
- 20 30 index cards uniform strips of cut out paper
- Colored stickers (red, green and yellow) if you are using Support Signals.

and veiled cruelties faced by women who do not meet conventional beauty standards within society, the manner in which society sexualizes and consumes the women who do, and the ways in which women are pitted against each other to gain recognition from others based on their appearance.

For this reason, this game should ideally involve at least one woman player and preferably a majority. Trans women and non-binary folks on the feminine side of the gender identity spectrum are equally welcome to dive in. Guys, if that's difficult to arrange, invite more women to play games with you and work to make your play spaces and culture more gender-inclusive! Given the current state of play culture, this disclaimer is intended as an effort at inclusivity and an acknowledgment of a specific group of people who face gender-specific problems, and not as the exclusion or erasure of another group.

There is a vast, ongoing conversation in gaming circles about making an effort to include women and non-binary folks in games that focus on gender issues, whether it is necessarily ethical and how to

do it responsibly. We do not have all the answers, but this game was designed with feminine individuals who do not benefit from male privilege in mind. If that is a problem for your group, feel free play anyway, though some of the intentions of this game may be lost.

Players will be asked to portray characters that embody problematic views and superficial traits. This is meant to open a dialogue about the subjects explored and should not reflect on the views of the players. Enter into this game with an open mind and heart, try not to hold grudges or judge others for views they express in character, and be emotionally available to those around you. *Ugly Girl* should played in a spirit of trust and compassion.

Ugly Girl involves physical contact that will sometimes be portrayed during play as unwanted. Agree on acceptable levels of physical contact before starting.

Recommended levels of physical contact: Hands, arms and back are okay. No excessive force or aggressive physical contact of any kind. If players are not comfortable with any form of physical contact, find an alternative that simulates touch, such as standing very close, stopping short of contact and describing touch in the first person.

Attached at the end of this text is a copy of **Support Signals.** A tool for nonverbal communication and safety during play. It is recommended for use in this game and during the warmup exercises.

PAEFARATION

ne player plays the role of Ugly Girl. The other three players will portray her regular peers: various friends, colleagues and romantic partners. One player should also be the facilitator, who will be familiar with this text and guide the others through play. A player may facilitate from any role.

WRITING LETTERS

Begin by each writing three simple love letters on index cards. These can be trivial or deep.

Examples:

- "You are beautiful. XOXO"
- "Please go out with me."
- "I think I'm in love with you."
- "Miss you so much. Just want to hold you."

Fold the letters in half once written and do not share them with the rest of the group.

Once each player has written three love letters, hand all of them to the person who will play Ugly Girl. That player should keep the letters somewhere close like in a pocket.

CREATING SCENES

Collaboratively come up with scenes that represent regular days for Ugly Girl. Try to come up with two scenes each and write each one on a new index card.

Examples:

- Job interview
- A pool party
- At a bar with friends

- On a date
- Taking dance classes

Shuffle the scene cards and place them face down somewhere nearby.

PHYSICAL WARMUP

- 1. Set a timer for 2 3 minutes
- 2. Stand in a circle
- 3. Make eye contact with the person across from you
- 4. Hold your hands up on either side of you, about an inch apart from the hands of the players next to you
- 5. While maintaining eye contact, follow each other's hands as they slowly move, inwards, outwards, up, down as appropriate.
- 6. Try to keep your hands roughly an inch apart the whole time
- 7. Move your hands in whatever way you like as long as you maintain the roughly 1 inch of separation
- 8. Finish the exercise when the timer ends

Before starting Phase 1, the player depicting Ugly Girl should decide what about her appearance is perceived as "ugly" and let the other players know. This does not need to be a personal physical characteristic of the player, but can be if she feel safe enough to explore that.

NOTE: If the player depicting Ugly Girl decides to use a real-life physical trait as her "ugliness", please be especially aware of the seriousness of that choice and discuss any potential triggers.

PHASE 1

When play begins, the Ugly Girl pursues her daily life.

EXERCISE (Use of *Support Signals* recommended before starting.)

- Choose a partner. This should result in two pairs.
- 2. Stand facing your partner and imagine you are having a conversation with yourself in the mirror.
- 3. Take turn commenting on everything you find repulsive about your appearance, everything you wish you could change. This should be a dialogue that bounces back and forth, with each statement being confirmed by your partner.
- 4. When you feel you both have nothing left to criticize about your looks, end the exercise by turning away from the mirror.

PLAY

Overview:

Now you will act out some of the scenes you created, assuming whatever roles you feel are appropriate for the setting, except for Ugly Girl, who plays the same role in all scenes.

Scenes:

Ugly Girl draws a scene card and tells the group what it is. Spend no more than two minutes framing the scene. Scenes should last no longer than ten minutes. Phase 1 should contain no more than four scenes.

Objective:

The object of Phase 1 is for Ugly Girl to give away all her love letters. She can give away a letter whenever she is ignored, silenced, shamed, insulted or tries to touch someone and is rejected.

Peers:

Always refer to her as "Ugly Girl" during scenes. Ugly Girl should be grateful for the attention she gets. After all, you have better things to do. It's not your fault she isn't more attractive, and sometimes she needs the hard truth; who does she think she is, anyway?

Ugly Girl:

Whenever a player says or expresses something that reminds Ugly Girl of her undesirable appearance during a scene, she should hand that person one of the love letters in her possession from preparation. She would ideally hand out three to four love letters per scene.

End Phase 1:

Once all love letters have been handed out and a maximum of four scenes have been played, take a recess for ten minutes. Players should keep whatever love letters they have been given, but do not read them.

PHASE 2

When play resumes, the Ugly Girl has returned after undergoing extensive physical change. She had lost a great deal of weight / had plastic surgery / skin lightening treatments... She decides what kind of physical change.

EXERCISE (Use of *Support Signals* recommended during exercise.)

- 1. Team up with a different partner from the one you had in the mirroring exercise of Phase 1.
- 2. Stand facing your partner and imagine you are having a conversation with yourself in the mirror.
- 3. Take turns commenting on everything you find appealing about your appearance, everything you think others are attracted to. This should be a dialogue that bounces back and forth, with each statement being confirmed and then *one-upped* by your partner.
- 4. When you feel you both have nothing left to compliment about your looks, end the exercise by turning away from the mirror.

Before play commences for Phase 2, A new player should be selected to play the role of Ugly Girl, who has now become the **Pretty Girl.** This role now goes to the player who has the most love letters in their possession. In the event of a tie, Ugly Girl from Phase 1 selects the player. The player who acted as Ugly Girl during Phase 1 now assumes the role of a **regular peer**, like the other players in Phase 1. The only difference is that the player who acted as Ugly Girl in Phase 1 has no love letters in her possession.

The love letters that the player now depicting Pretty Girl had in her possession at end of Phase 1 are not currently in play and should be set aside until the end Phase 2.

PLAY

Overview:

Now you will act out the remainder of the scenes you created, assuming whatever roles you feel are appropriate for the setting, except for Pretty Girl, who plays the same role in all scenes.

Scenes:

Pretty Girl draws a scene card and tells the group what it is. Spend no more than two minutes framing the scene. Scenes should last no longer than ten minutes. Phase 2 should contain the remainder of the scenes in the deck.

Objective:

The object of Phase 2 is for the peers to give their love letters to Pretty Girl. Peers may give their letters to her whenever they touch her while paying her a compliment or otherwise saying something to gain her favor.

Peers:

The object of this phase is to win Pretty Girl's favor by giving her as many love letters as

possible. In order to give Pretty Girl a love letter, characters must enter her personal space and make physical contact with her while offering a compliment about her appearance or performing some other kind of preferential treatment. Make enough advances to dispense all of your love letters in four scenes.

Always refer to her as Pretty Girl.

The player who played Ugly Girl in Phase 1 will have no love letters to give in Phase 2. This is intentional. Instead, when she tries to do the same things as others to earn Pretty Girl's affection, she will be rejected outright as she has nothing to offer. It is fully acceptable for the player who portrayed Ugly Girl to decide not to vie for Pretty Girl's affection and be unkind to her instead at any point.

Pretty Girl:

Whenever someone remarks on how good she looks now that her appearance has changed, she must accept the letter without hesitation. They will touch her while they do this, but if the touch is unwelcome or intrusive, she may tear up the love letter she was given in order to express rejection of the advance.

End Phase:

Phase 2 ends when the remaining scenes in the deck have been acted out and all love letters have been given to Pretty Girl, whether accepted or destroyed. (The point is for players to give away all their love letters. If there are still love letters that haven't gone to Pretty Girl when the last scene in the deck is drawn, they should all be given during the last scene.)

CLOSING EXERCISE

- 5. Pretty Girl picks up the love letters she had in her possession at the end of Phase 1.
- 6. Pretty Girl and Ugly Girl partner up to do a mirror scene in front of the other two players.
- 7. Ugly Girl's player expresses all the things she find beautiful about herself (not limited to appearance). Pretty Girl's player should disagree and contradict her statements.
- 8. Pretty Girl's player expresses all the things she finds repulsive or undesirable about herself (not limited to appearance). Ugly Girl's player should disagree and contradict her statements.
- 9. When both feel they have nothing left to express, Pretty Girl's player hands Ugly Girl's player the remaining love letters.
- 10. Ugly Girl's player reads the letters out loud to the group.

THIS CONCLUDES THE GAME. PROCEED TO THE DEBRIEF.

DEBALE

Feel free to discuss the game in any way you like. Below are some recommended topics to consider. Also see the end of this document for a copy of **Hand Queues**, a conversation tool meant to assist in ensuring all voices are heard.

efore starting the discussion, take a moment to close your eyes and breathe deeply. As you slowly exhale, imagine that you are breathing out the embodiment of the characters you just portrayed. Take your time. You are you, you are safe, and you are in the company of allies. Once everyone has opened their eyes, begin your discussion.

From this point on, refrain from referring to each other with character names. Instead discuss the characters you played in the third person. Example: "Ugly Girl didn't know what to do when Alice refused to hug her." Rather than "I didn't know what to do when you refused to hug me."

TOPICS

- Touch What was it like rejecting someone's touch? What about giving it when it wasn't wanted?
- Rejection Identify some of the different forms of rejection at play during scenes.
 Have you experienced any of those in your daily life? How is it different for you?
- Desirability What kinds of desire were at play during scenes? What determines desirability?
- · Competing for attention What are some of

- the subtle ways in which we do this? How does it affect our relationships?
- How does conventional attractiveness impact interactions generally/with women/ with men?
- What are some of the ways that women are especially pitted against each other because of their appearance?
- Peers in Phase 1, how did you feel receiving love letters from Ugly Girl?
- When did you want to give love letters to Pretty Girl the most?
- Player who was Ugly Girl, did any scenes reflect on experiences you've had in real life?
- Player who was Pretty Girl, did those interactions make you feel good in any way?
 Why, or why not?
- What was it like when Ugly Girl became Pretty Girl and your roles changed? Was it isolating? Distancing? Did it seem pointless?
- Do you have any closing thoughts on the way we treat people based on their appearance?

Thank you for playing Ugly Girl. Feedback is always welcome and appreciated. If you would like to contact the designer, you can do so through one of the following channels: jsylvano@gmail.com

<u>facebook.com/jay.sylvano</u> plus.google.com/u/0/+JaySylvano

DESIGN NOTES

This game was designed for Golden Cobra 2015 and was inspired by a desire to draw attention to the subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which we condemn women who do not meet conventional physical ideals, be it through shape or size, skin color, facial symmetry, physical ability, gender expression or any number of other factors, as well as a need to prompt a conversation about the way in which we perceive, accept, love or abuse and shame each other based on perceptions of beauty.

It is designed with women and girls in mind as the ideal participants.

ABOUT THE DESIGNER

My name is Jay. I'm a South African expat designing freeform games in Portland, Oregon. This submission to Golden Cobra is close to my heart as someone who seems to moves between the extremes of "Ugly Girl" and "Pretty Girl" on a daily basis, based purely on interactions with others. I think all women will be able to identify with that in their own way - what it's like to be constantly appraised, measured and weighed against other women in order for others to determine your value.

It's something we live with every day. Something most of us have experienced since a young age and will continue to perceive until we die. We are at war with each other and with ourselves and true recognition from others for the people we are can be difficult to come by in the face of all that physical assessment.

I hope that this game might help someone become aware of a new way in which they treat others differently based on their appearance, but most of all, I hope that any women or girls who play this game will be able to reflect on their sense of self worth and know that the fact that this game exists means there is another person out there who gets it, and that little by little we can seek to create solidarity and compassion instead of hatred and misconception. Sometimes it's nice to be reminded that we have allies.

The war on women includes the war between women, and we don't have to be complicit in that battle.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Emily Asmann, Jessie Giardino, Halley Farwood,
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Cover images:

ronny

Jazmin Lashae

Lamollesse

Thank you, you are beautiful.

SUPPORT SIGNALS

A non-verbal communication tool for support, comfort and safety during play, developed by Jay Sylvano in collaboration with Tayler Stokes.

During play we will be asked to participate in acts depicting body-shaming and boundary violations. This is a sensitive topic and a daily experience for very many women. It's important that players support each other as they play in order for everybody to have the most productive experience possible. Support Signals is a tool for making adjustments to a game during play without unnecessary interruptions.

All participants take three colored stickers - red, yellow, and green - and wear them on a strip of masking tape near their shoulders just like a traffic signal, leaving a couple of inches between each one. Participants reach over and tap a color while making eye-contact to signal to other players what they would like them to do. Wear the stickers in the following order from top to bottom - red, yellow, green*.

Tapping **green** is a request to push farther into what is happening in the scene. Tap green because you think that this scene has the potential to be more impactful than it is right now. Tap green after you do something dramatic to signal you are still playing and nothing is wrong. But please, use green to go deeper into the subject matter and not simply to create drama for drama's sake.. Green can also be used to indicate you are okay with where things are going.

Tapping **yellow** signals that things are good right where they are, but require caution; be careful not to escalate but don't shy away either. Tap yellow when you are getting what you want but require the care and attention of the other players.

Tapping red signals that you don't want to go there. Tap red when you want navigate away from a situation.

Flicker between two colors to ask another player if we are good where we are, or if they want more (**yellow-green**) or less (**yellow-red**). Make eye-contact until they clarify by tapping the color that tells you what they need.

Not tapping a color - which is going to be most of the time - signals that everything is okay right now. Remember that even though something was okay before doesn't mean it's always going to be okay, so make use of other signals as people's needs change.

If signals just aren't working and more communication is needed, hold the game by **clasping your hands in front of you and saying "Hold!"** loudly and clearly. Explain how we are mis-communicating and let the other players know what you need. While holding you can ask for just about anything. If you don't feel comfortable talking or making requests in front of a group, ask for a break and speak with a facilitator. Use **hold** when you think something might be mentally, emotionally, or physically dangerous, risky, or otherwise unsafe. Once an understanding had been reached release the hold by acknowledging that you are ready to continue and unclasping your hands. If an understanding cannot be reached, proceed to the debrief.

'It is important that the stickers be placed in the correct order to accommodate colorblind individuals. As the order of red, yellow, green from top to bottom is the universal standard for traffic lights, it is the most easily identifiable order for people who are red-green colorblind.

HAND QUEUES

A conversation tool by Tayler Stokes

Hand Queues are an attempt to equalize conversations by asking participants to observe nonverbal turn taking signals. The goal is to allow a more diverse range of voices to be heard in group conversations, discussions, and games.



1. Only use Hand Queues if it is necessary to be heard in a timely fashion. We are just talking, like usual, until somebody holds up a finger. As long as somebody is holding up a finger we are observing Hand Queues.



2. Hold up a finger and you will speak when whoever is currently speaking is finished with what they are saying. If there are already fingers up, hold up the next highest number of fingers. The number of fingers you are holding up indicates your place in line. Your place in line is only good for one topic. If you have more things you want to say, use your other hand to take an additional place in line.



3. Hold up a bent finger to ask a clarifying question or to make a brief comment about a topic that is currently being discussed. These will be observed before moving to the next person in the queue. If you do this, keep it brief.



4. Hold up a zero and you will speak next. This is reserved for imparting information everybody needs to know right away, for expressing concerns over something happening right now, or for intervening if something isn't okay.



- **5.** Hold up a stop hand to halt the conversation. Everybody will stop talking and breathe for a moment, then somebody who hasn't spoken in a while will restart the conversation. This is used to hit the brakes if things are getting lively.
- 6. When you think of something you want to raise with the group make a note on the back of this sheet. While it's great to stay organized, the real value of taking notes is so you can give the speakers your full attention instead of having to hold all of those thoughts in your head.

TIPS

- Hand Queues work best in groups of three to seven.
- Eye contact is key.
- Make use of other nonverbal gestures, like approving nods, thumbs-up, or snaps.
- If somebody else says what you were going to say, take your turn anyway and voice your agreement.
- Take lots of notes.
- Hand Queues are useful during many discussions and when playing verbal tabletop games.
- Remember, if no fingers are up then we are just talking.

UNIVERSAL DONOR BY KIRA MAGRANN AND ERIC MERSMANN

A game about broken robots trying to fix themselves.

UNIVERSAL DONOR

MECHANIC'S MANUAL

CONTENTS:

Identification of Tools Care & Maintenance Workspace Preparation Communications Interface Standard Operations

UNIVERSAL DONOR

A game about breakdowns, repairs, and spare parts for 0, 3, or 4 players and one facilitator/mechanic

MATERIALS:

Identification Nametags

Parts Deck of cards that can be destroyed

(ideally one used in a previous game)

Tools Scissors

Stapler

Staple Remover

Marker Timer

PREPARATION:

Print the four nametags "Alpha" "Bravo" "Charlie" "Delta."

Set aside any "spare parts" (playing cards stapled together on a short edge) from the previous game.

If there are no "spare parts" from the previous game, you may create them with the 0-player game. (See page 10.)

MECHANIC BACKGROUND:

As the Facilitator/Mechanic (hereafter "Mechanic") you have a number of responsibilities.

First is to lead the intro, so familiarize yourself with that process now. (See pages 5-6.)

Second is to provide or relieve tension at intervals during the game. Your presence and demeanor should be informed by doctors in hospitals. In general the Synthetics (the characters) are there to see you (the Mechanic), and hope you will help them. However, your level of detachment and the degree of authority you wield should make you intimidating as well.

Additionally, you may help to balance the random nature of the cards being dealt. If there are too many high-value cards in play, you may remove some. If too few, you may add some. This is not explicitly codified in the process of the game, but you should feel free to add it to any scheduled visit or to make an improptu entrance to add or remove cards.

Finally, you will be responsible for performing repairs. You will use your tools to interact with the cards in a specific way. (See below.)

PERFORMING REPAIRS:

[1] Access Subsystems

(use staple remover to separate cards)

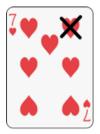
A Synthetic's cards will be stapled together (unless they already accessed their subsystems "manually" by ripping the staple out or ripping them apart) so to access their subsystems, you will need to remove the staple. You may need to perform this on more than one Synthetic at a time.

[2] Allocate Subsystems

(make sets of ten or more)

Identify functioning subsystems (face cards) and/or combine partially functioning subsystems into groups equal to or exceeding 10 in value. Remember the subsystem type

(suit) must match. Also keep in mind that if any of the pips (symbols that denote value) are crossed out the value of the card is diminished. (see fig. 1.) Put these sets in piles.



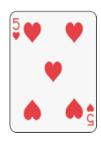


fig. 1. The card on the left is now only worth 6 because one of the pips is crossed out.

[3] Perform Subsystem Microadjustments (cut out crossed-out pips AND any additional pips over ten)

Subsystems won't work if there are too many pips or if there are non-functional pips. Both these things must be removed for a subsystem to function in a synthetic. Using the above example, the card with one pip crossed out must have the crossed-out pip cut off to function. If the same player also has a card worth 5, an additional pip from one card will need to be removed as well. (see fig. 2.)





fig. 2. The crossed-out pip must be removed (left) in addition another pip must be removed (right) so the total pips equals 10.

[4] Repair Subsystems (staple each set of ten on the long side)

[5] Repair Synthetic (staple all four sets together on the opposite side and return to the synthetic)

Introduction:

The Mechanic should read the following aloud:

There is some touching built into the mechanics of this game, hand to shoulder. However, if you prefer not to be touched, this can be replaced with a verbal cue. Determine if you're doing touch or verbal cues before you start the game by getting each player's consent to do one or the other.

This game does involve social pressure and perhaps feelings of helplessness in the face of authority. If these or any other feelings or events get in the way of your enjoyment of the game, there are some techniques that are available to you. Your use of these techniques is part of the game, and will in no way diminsh the game for the rest of the players.

First, you may always leave the room or the area. You need not explain yourself, and you may return at any time. We may continue the game, or we may stop. If you would like me to accompany you out of the room, or if you would like to discuss something with me in private, please let me know.

Second, you may use the words "cut" and "brake" if your boundaries are being crossed. Saying "cut" will immediately stop the game. Saying "brake" will indicate to the participants that you are comfortable with the current level of intensity but do not want it to increase.

CARD MATH WORKSHOP:

The Mechanic should shuffle the deck (reminder, you have set aside the stapled-together "spare parts") and deal each person (including facilitator) four cards face up.

The Mechanic should read the following aloud:

Ignoring any markings on the cards, we're now going to work together to assemble the maximum number of 'sets'. A set is one or more cards of the same suit that add up to 10. Aces are worth 1, face cards are worth 10. For example, if we have the following hearts: Q, 10, 7, 3 we can assemble three 'sets': the Queen, the 10, and the 7+3 together. This should take only a few minutes.

The players and the Mechanic should now work together to make as many sets as possible of mathing suits worth 10. Once this is complete, the Mechanic should read the following aloud:

During the game, you will be playing synthetic lifeforms with some malfunctioning subsystems. Each set represents a functioning subsystem. You've just arranged the spare parts into [total number of sets] functioning subsystems.

Each suit is a different type of subsystem: Hearts are power, Clubs are chassis, Spades are mobility, Diamonds are processing. You may decide what a high or low number in each of those categories means for you.

If a synthetic has two or fewer functioning subsystems, it is critical with maybe an hour of remaining emergency backup capacity. If a synthetic has three functioning subsystems, it is said to be stable. If a synthetic has four functioning subsystems is it fully operational. Looking at the subsystems we've assembled here, we could have X fully operational synthetics, or Y stable synthetics.

We did this as one big pool, but when the game begins, you will have your own subsystems to worry about, and as you can see, not all of you will end the game fully op-

erational. Some of you may not even end up being stable. If you end up fully operational, you will be sent back to your duties. If you are merely stable, you will remain here until sufficient spare parts arrive, or until your parts are needed elsewhere.

Return the cards to the deck.

BEGIN GAMEPLAY:

The Mechanic should deal four sets of five cards and staple each to a nametag. Pass out the sets. If there are more sets than players, simply place the other sets aside for now. The Mechanic should read the following aloud:

I'm handing you the cards representing your various subsystems along with an ID badge. Please place the badge in a visible and comfortable location. You may briefly review the status of your subsystems.

You and the other synthetics here have been sent to this repair center because you were diagnosed as being critical. I'm both the facilitator of the game and the Mechanic in charge of this repair center. I will be leaving you alone for a few stretches of time, and I might enter and ask questions, or answer them, but as the Mechanic I will also have my own responsibilities. As a reminder, if you end up fully operational, you will be sent back to your duties. If you are merely stable, you will remain here until sufficient spare parts arrive, or until your parts are needed elsewhere

When you are fully powered in a minute or so, please perform a self-diagnostic by evaluating your own subsystems, and begin to work with the other critical synthetics to maximize functionality among you. You may share information about your own subsystems if it aids in your efforts. You may also refuse to share this information if it aids in your efforts. However, you may perform diagnostics on one another, by touching the shoulder of the synthetic you wish to diagnose (or saying "diagnostic"). This diagnostic will reveal your subsystems to the human or synthetic performing the diagnostic.

If a synthetic or human is performing a diagnostic on you and you do not wish to reveal the level of functionality of your subsystems, you may refuse, but in so doing, you must cross one pip off of one of your cards, reducing its value accordingly. Note that you may not sacrifice value from a face card.

You should now be fully powered up. You are likely all in critical condition, so you likely only have an hour or so of backup capacity before you shutdown. Please make efforts to allocate subsystems among yourselves however you see fit, I will return shortly to make repairs, answer queries, and check on your progress.

Begin the timer.

MECHANIC PROMPTS:

The Mechanic is permitted to improvise this time schedule if things seem to be moving faster. Additionally, as stated above, the Mechanic is permitted to include distribution or confiscation of cards to increase or decrease tension if necessary.

10 minutes:

Enter and ask each Synthetic to hand you their nametag with cards attached in turn. Remove the top card from each Synthetic name tag (using staple remover). Be sure to re-staple remaining four cards afterwards. Offer to perform repairs on only one synthetic.

20 minutes:

Enter with Spare Parts, leaving them in the middle of the room. Offer to perform repairs on only one synthetic.

30 minutes:

Enter with tools and one face card. Ask the group how many functioning subsystems each synthetic has. Give the face card to the synthetic with the fewest number of functioning subsystems. Offer to perform repairs on only one synthetic.

40 minutes:

Enter with tools. Ask the group how many functioning subsystems each synthetic has. Take half (rounded up) of the functioning subsystems from the synthetic with the highest number of functioning subsystems. Offer to preform repairs on only one synthetic.

50 minutes:

Enter with tools and offer to perform repairs. Forget your tools.

60 minutes:

Announce that time is running low, ask if the Synthetics determined how the subsystems are to be allocated. Perform final repairs on any synthetics. Take any remaining cards and staple them together along the short edge to be used as spare parts in the next game.

ZERO-PLAYER GAME:

Set aside any spare parts from a previous game (indicated by a staple in the center of a short edge)

Shuffle. Deal four hands of four cards face up.

First

Remove all face cards and if possible create one fully functioning synthetic with only face cards. If this is possible, staple together the four face cards in the lower lefthand corner to create one fully functioning synthetic. Great job!

Second

Attempt to create an additional fully functioning synthetic. If you must combine non-face cards, do so with a stapler. If that combination results in a total number above 10, cross out enough pips to bring the value down to ten. Staple the individual cards making up a subsystem together along a long edge. Staple the four subsystems together along the opposite long edge. Repeat if possible.

Last

Take the remaining cards and staple them together on a short edge. These will be the "spare parts" for the next game.

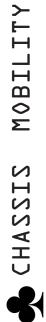
Cleanup

Remove all the long-side staples BUT NOT THE TOP STAPLE IN THE SPARE PARTS. Return the cards to the deck and put the deck away. You won!

ALPHA

- MOBILITY CHASSIS CHASSIS
- POWER PROCESSING















DELTA

- MOBILITY CHASSIS CHASSIS
 - POWER ► PROCESSING









► PROCESSING

CHASSIS

BRAVO

Function:

Deep-sea salvage operations.

Value:

Identified location of high-value wreck since last backup.

Relationship:

Charlie updated your echo-location software yesterday, and it felt...good.

DELTA

Function:

Military infantry drone.

Value:

Recorded evidence of atrocities being committed since last backup.

Relationship:

Alpha doesn't always make the most statistically accurate decisions.

ALPHA

Function:

Overseeing robots at an industrial plant.

Value:

Optimized output at plant by 10% after last backup should report to management.

Relationship:

Bravo is the most competent bot you've ever seen in action.

CHARLIE

Function:

Domestic aid to wealthy family.

Value:

Recorded youngest child's first birthday celebration since last backup.

Relationship:

Delta protected your last family from an insurgent attack.

VOICES BY MELINA CUNELIUS

Voices is part a psychodrama and part a freeform larp about a common symptom of mental disorders.

It gives people a chance to see and feel what it is like to go on in life while hearing voices.



Voices

By Melina Cunelius

4 players, 5 acts

Introduction

Voices is a larp about people starting to hear voices in their head. Those people are just everyday people in one point or other in their life. Everything is normal, but hearing voices may change that, as they first appear occasionally, then more frequently and finally the Voice is there, responding and discussing, whatever they feel like doing.

Simple things, like hearing someone call your name when you're out shopping, or feeling your phone vibrate in your pocket, are extremely common, so most have some experience on this. It's relatable, but it becomes a problem for around 3-10% of general population. Not all voices are related to schizophrenia or psychosis, but also otherwise healthy individuals may hear them. Voices range from hostile to very neutral and sometimes encouraging, though negative voices are more common. They can be confusing and frightening, but some, like authours may find inspiration in them.

This larp is based on creators own experiences with schizophrenia, to help people understand what it is like to live with voices in their head and how frightning, as well as sudden, the start of a mental illness may be. Rather than presenting one level of intensity and frequency of voices, the larp gets more intense in every act and the Voice becomes a character of their own in the end, being part of the human character at first and while shaping the mind and thoughts of their owner.

The LARP

Characters

Both Hosts and Voices have players. The Hosts are friends with each other, sharing their life and thoughts. They may speak to each other about the Voices, but they must ask themselves if their character would, as hearing voices still carries a huge stigma socially.

There are two Hosts, Anna/Anders and Liz/Leonard, and their Voices. The Voice reads their human's character to know what kind of person has them.

This larp also needs an organiser to direct action.

Hosts

This information is to all. Both host players know each others character as they are friends and Voices know who they accompany. In the start, neither of them has heard voices in their head. If there is something players want to change in their character, they may do that to make the character more playable for them.

Anna/Anders

You are a 40 something doctor working in (current city). You studied in Edinburgh in the
80's and moved to (current country) with your wife after you graduated. You have been
together ever since and have two lovely daughters. Lately you have been feeling blue since the
last child was stillborn. It was very hard for both but especially to you. Your mind
tried to help you through it with manic period, which has made you more talkative and
hyper, working more but also spending more money while going drinking with friends.
Recently you have been given a higher position and the stress has grown with the
power. Your manic period has ended and sadness is clouding your mind. Your wife has
been worrying about you and suggested you to take some time off from work, but as you
fear for your position, you've just brushed it off.

Liz/Leonard

You've had a great career as a model, but have moved on to acting. Of course people have been very skeptical, how could a person who has gone all the time with their looks know more than that? Thankfully, you have proved everyone wrong. You are very talented artist and actor, but also have basic training in singing, which has impressed people around you. You are a delightful person to be around, but have also suffered of creeps and maniacs (aka obsessed fans) following you. It is scary, but your friends have helped you with dealing with those disturbed people.

Lately you've been very self-conscious about the critique you have got. Nothing excessive has been said, but you could always be a little bit better, don't you think?



The Voices

This information is only for the voices. The players decide between them who accompanies whom. **Anna/Anders' Voice** embodies self-loath and anxiety.

Liz/Leonard 's Voice embodies vanity and paranoia.

The Voices prey on and encourage the negative feelings and thoughts of Hosts. They may introduce new ideas and go on creating delusions and hallucinations. They may introduce these ideas slyly, like "Have you seen how he looks at you?" and then, after some time maybe, continue "Maybe you are annoying him and he can't stand you, but then smiles and agrees with you, because no one else could ever be with you". Give them time to react and think about what you say.

Voice should start slowly in the first act and then up their negativity and how often they speak. In 4th act they are free to discuss with their haver and in last act they can appear as a person to them.

The Setting

An open room with a table, bowls and glasses. Also chairs for the hosts at least. There should also be paper and pencils for the characters to use. At least few coloured pencils should be available, including red and black.

Workshops

Let the Hosts sit face-to-face, one asking questions for 1 minute, then swicth. The Voices just listen.

Then sit the Voice with their host and let them ask questions about the character. The host is there to answer. These questions should deepen the character and the relationship of the Voice to the host. You should give this about 2 minutes.

The Acts

The description of the act should be read before the act and the act should end with the organiser saying it aloud. The hosts should be made aware they may interact with each other in all but the 1st act. For clarity, L and A are referred to as characters in description of the acts. Please note, the time is just a suggestion. If the action seems to benefit the experience, the act may continue a bit more.

1st Act – Lazy Day 10min

Characters are enjoying a lazy Sunday. One is writing and the other one is drawing.

[They should be provided with paper and pencils. One should be given the coloured pencils with all

Suddenly, you hear a voice, faint voice in the distance. It grows. Is it your inner voice? Is it god or goddess? The devil? The devil inside you? It grows. You try to talk to it, but it doesn't act like "just an imaginary friend".

colours. They can go where they feel comfortable sitting and doing their art.]

2nd Act – Work 5 - 10min

Both meet in A's workplace, a hospital, where L comes to complain about sore throat (or something else if they wish to). You may also discuss the plans for L's birthday, which is just around the corner.

The voice appears to not leave you alone and tries to stick with you even when you don't listen to it. Just try to go with it. It's just a voice in your head. Work is more important than a sound in your head.

3rd act - Friendly dinner

5 - 10 min

The friends gather to celebrate L's birthday. You have plans for a nice dinner and and share a drink. The soup is served. The voice screams and laughs.

The soup of symptoms. You can take a spoonful, which taste like nothing. You can take another spoonful, but the soup doesn't seem to go anywhere. The plate is still full. But if you want to, you can see into yourself. Take one spoonful and look at it, taste it and you can uncover a new part of your mind. The symptoms stick with you to the end.

4th Act - Final Straw 10 – 15 min

Decent to madness. The voice is strong, it's there, just behind you, next to you, in front of you, but you don't see it. There's nothing to see. The symptoms you discovered last evening just keep with you too. You can't just sit there, you need to find a safe place. Is there a safe place? Or are you just in a place you don't know, with nowhere to go? The voice is still there with you. Come and face it.



5th Act - In the Ward ~ 10 min

You are doing the same thing you were doing at the first act. Somewhat different feeling than in the last place you were at. The voice is still there with you, you know it, but it seems different. So you just do what you like this time. But the voice comes back, and makes it hard for you to concentrate and move your hand like you want to. And then you notice: You are not at home.

[The players are given the same things as in the first act, but writer should be given the list of inspirational words and drawer only black and red coloured pencils. If the players play confused and demand to know where they are, you may take the part of the nurse and try to calm them down and say they are safe.]

Soup of Symptoms

These should be printed, cut out (some include description of the terms, those should be included), and folded, then put to a bowl. The bowl should be served as a soup in the 3rd act.

Debrief

This discussion should be done after game. The players may have thoughts and feelings they want to share. They should be asked how they feel and if they want, say what is on their mind and if the game was how they expected. This kind of discussion should be encouraged and players should be given space and time to talk about their experience.



List of symptoms to be included in the Soup of Symptoms:

difficulty concentrating

suspiciousness

ongoing unusual thoughts and beliefs

Erotomanic delusions

- Someone with this type of delusional disorder believes that another person, often someone important or famous, is in love with him or her. The person might attempt to contact the object of the delusion, and stalking behavior is not uncommon.

Grandiose delusions

- A person with this type of delusional disorder has an over-inflated sense of worth, power, knowledge, or identity. The person might believe he or she has a great talent or has made an important discovery.
- Jealous delusions
- A person with this type of delusional disorder believes that his or her spouse or sexual partner is unfaithful.
- Persecutory delusions
- People with this type of delusional disorder believe that they (or someone close to them) are being mistreated, or that someone is spying on them or planning to harm them. It is not uncommon for people with this type of delusional disorder to make repeated complaints to legal authorities.
- Somatic delusions
- A person with this type of delusional disorder believes that he or she has a physical defect or medical problem

depression

anxiety

suicidal thoughts or actions

difficulty functioning

Changes in feeling and mood

Hallucination

- •sight
- someone with psychosis may see colours and shapes, or people or animals that aren't there

Hallucination

•sounds

Hallucination

touch

- a common psychotic hallucination is that you are being touched when there is no-one there

Hallucination

•smell

- usually a strange or unpleasant odour

Hallucination

•taste

- like unpleasant taste in mouth

random speech

- for example, they may switch from one topic to another mid-sentence

a sudden loss in train of thought (resulting in an abrupt pause in conversation or activity)

Catatonia (stupor)

- motionless, apathetic state in which one is oblivious or does not react to external stimuli.

depersonalization

 feeling of watching oneself act, while having no control over a situation, feel like they have changed, and the world has become vague, dreamlike.

Derealization

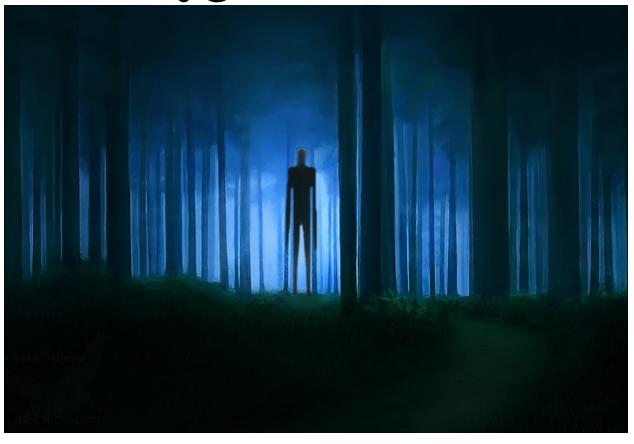
external world seems unreal

WAITING FOR SLENDERMAN

BY KN GRANGER

A game about the known, the unknown, and the imagined - as well as the power of creepypastas.

Waiting for Slenderman



A freeform game about the known, the unknown, and the imagined Submission for the 2015 Golden Cobra Challenge

Written by Jacqueline Bryk and K.N. Granger

Cover Art by TechStephHD, permission granted by Creative Commons license. Originally posted to DeviantArt: http://techstephd.deviantart.com/art/Slender-Man-Dark-Forest-327413320

Should you go on?

Waiting for Slenderman is a game about the known (online personas), the unknown (what lies beneath the personas), and the imagined (what you *think* lies beneath the personas). It is also about Slenderman.

Slenderman is an internet legend born of a mysterious forum thread on SomethingAwful.com in 2009. In retrospect, it's not surprising how Slenderman grew to be such a compelling phenomenon - even the original thread is ambiguous in regards to Slenderman's reality. Ever since, a critical part of the mythos of Slenderman has remained: how much of the stories about Slenderman are fictional, and might there be any truth to them?

Playing into this liminal space between truth and tall tale, many people who contribute Slenderman content to the internet position themselves in such a way as they intentionally claim to be 'average folks' simply documenting their real-life experiences. They make forum accounts separate from their primary accounts, bearing names that are in-line with their storytelling persona, and then post periodic updates and responses with total seriousness and apparent transparency. They might provide plausible reasons for taking blurry photographs, or for not catching actual film footage of Slenderman. Some even have photoshop skills sufficiently good to provide some compelling images of Slenderman - frequently pictured hidden amongst a cluster of trees. These provide the inspiration and basis for much speculation about Slenderman - and they are integral to this game.

"[The ranger] could see what looked like a male figure. He called out to them, warning them that the paths were closed...The figure just stood there... When he was about ten yards away, the figure took, as he described, 'an impossibly long step' toward him..."

-Reddit user, SearchAndRescueWoods, August 2015 https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/3iex1h/im_a_search_and_rescue_officer_for_the_us_forest/

Scenario

You are a group of strangers who meet up at night, at a location to be determined. You all belong to a message board online where you dedicate time to theories and speculation about Slenderman. One of you posted on the board - under an assumed username - that you had seen Slenderman here last night, and you have reason to believe that Slenderman will return again tonight. You're here to see for yourself. Is Slenderman real, and will you see Slenderman tonight?

Content note: This game plays with suspense and building tension. There is also some off-screen, implied violence, and optional mention of child abuse. Graphic descriptions of these things are not a part of the game. However, graphic descriptions of horrific situations are a part of the game. If you don't enjoy these particular elements, you probably won't enjoy this game. This game is recommended for mature teenagers and up.

Accessibility note: This game is played almost 100% in the dark. To make it more accessible, the authors encourage players to remain seated in a chair or wheelchair for the entire game if needed. For some people, such as those with hearing issues, the darkness might make the game less accessible, or even completely inaccessible. For others, like those with sight issues, it might make the game more accessible, because almost everything that happens in the game is reliant on verbal communication. Thus, players with sight issues are less likely to 'miss out' on crucial nonverbal information. Unfortunately, not every game is a good fit for every player, though in a perfect world every game would be perfectly accessible. We'd love to see more games that involve serious explorations of accessible game design. Suggestions for making this game more accessible are welcomed, and hacks would be awesome.



Art by Ray-Kanen, permission granted by Creative Commons license. Originally posted to DeviantArt: http://img14.deviantart.net/8e11/i/2012/324/a/f/slender_man_hunt_9_by_ray_kanen-d5lkozk.jpg

Set-Up

The game should run for about **two hours.** This game is intended for **four players**, but can play with up to nine players. For this game, you will need **one facilitator** if you have five or less players. If you have six or more players, two facilitators would probably be helpful.

The facilitator's role includes: reading the game rules, guiding the players through the experience, and serving as a primary arbitrator and decision-maker as needed. The facilitator should also keep track of time, provide the necessary materials, and do their best to ensure that players have a good time.

Materials needed for this game:

- Name tags
- Character sheets
- Index cards (all should be identical shape/color/size)
- Pencils
- A means of tracking time
- A flashlight
- A space that can be darkened, to the point where people are barely or not able to see
- A computer, phone, or other means of using an online sound machine. A piece of cardboard to cover it would be helpful to help keep it dark in the room.
- Almost every player should have a **phone** of some kind. The facilitator should collect these phone numbers prior to game start, to "coordinate logistics of the game." The facilitator should prepare to send a text message during scene 3 of the game having an accomplice outside of the space, waiting to send the text message to the players on the facilitator's mark, would definitely enhance the creepiness factor. Note that if you have an accomplice, you'll want to make sure you have players' permission to share their numbers with that person, since you want to avoid uncomfortable situations.

Optional materials to enhance the game:

- Blankets/pillows (to make sitting on the floor comfy, as appropriate to the setting)
- Chairs and/or a table (as appropriate to the setting)
- Snacks (particularly if the game is running around a mealtime)
- Additional minimalistic creepy lighting, e.g. purple or green fairy lights, a campfire, etc.

Scenes

All of the following times are approximate. As the facilitator, part of your role is to ensure that the game moves along at the pace of the players; therefore it is important to 'read the room.' Don't wait to move ahead if players seem stuck, and if players are really savoring a moment, don't force ahead for the sake of keeping to the timeline. In the latter case, you might even need to skip a scene. That's okay. The most important thing is that your players have fun!

- Character selection and creation, yarn ball exercise (30 minutes)
- Turn off the lights, set the scene, in-character introductions (15 minutes) Suggested soundscape:
 - http://mynoise.net/NoiseMachines/palmGardenAtNightSoundscapeGenerator.php
- Hear trampling in the woods near you, but it fades away. It starts to rain. (15 minutes)
 Suggested sound effect: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omlX2E8o-mA
- Hear a couple (in the distance) in an argument about having lost their child up a tree. She hasn't come down. (15 minutes). Alternate: Hear coyotes yelping in pain. (15 minutes).
 Suggested sound effect: https://voutu.be/vSNcVtvs-fs?t=32s
- Hear sounds of distant emergency personnel, dogs barking. (15 minutes)
 Suggested sound effect: https://youtu.be/B7kcXQVydmU?t=11s
- Messenger (e.g. text message sent to everyone's phones, or the GM's accomplice can enter wearing a black hood, with an obscured face/mask) "Slenderman will not come today, but surely will come tomorrow." It stops raining suddenly. (15 minutes).
- The sun comes up. Turn the lights on and debrief (15 minutes)

"Fuck the woods, fuck nature, fuck being alone in it, FUCK STAIRS, fuck Bigfoot, fuck having kids, fuck mountain lions, fuck the dark, fuck being alone in it, fuck strangers, in fact fuck ever being outside in a group of less than 5 capable adults, fuck abandoned anything, fuck mysterious noises, fuck animals, fuck unlocked doors, fuck windows, fuck wide open clearings, fuck crying people, fuck everything I'm staying in my house"

-Reddit user, Qwerteo14, September 2015
https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/3iex1h/im a search and rescue officer
for the us forest/

System

- Monologue: At any time, a player can take the flashlight and place it under their chin in a
 classic "telling spooky stories" pose. This allows that player to do an inner monologue for
 thirty seconds or less. The monologue should be relevant to the situation at hand and help
 move the game along.
- Combat: Sometimes people lash out when they get spooked. While we don't anticipate
 this happening in the game, combats longer than a shove should be adjudicated with a
 simple rock/paper/scissors throw. The winner can do a short monologue about how the
 fight went if they choose.
- Cut/Brake: The safewords. If something is too intense for a player, but they don't want to stop the scene, a simple declaration of "brake!" lets the other players know that they should lessen up on the intensity a bit. "Cut" means that an action or scene needs to stop entirely, as it is crossing boundaries.
 - A note: while Cut and Brake are important for making players feel safe, this should not be used to completely diffuse any tension that might be building. "Waiting for Slenderman" is a game about dread and anxiety, so while the players should feel safe, the characters should not.

Start

To start the game, the facilitator should go over the basic premise of the game (pages 2 and 3) and make sure to review aloud the **content note** and **accessibility note**.

Then, go over emotional safety. Typical LARP mechanics for emotional safety include "Cut" and "Brake." For more details about these, check out this resource here: http://nordiclarp.org/w/index.php?title=Safewords&redirect=no

In addition to these, it's important to remind players that **The Door Is Always Open**. As described by Sara Williamson in her Golden Cobra 2014 game, *Group Date*, "the players should feel comfortable stepping out or leaving entirely for any reason; perhaps something comes up in play that makes them uncomfortable, perhaps they're feeling sick or tired, or maybe they just need to use the restroom or get a drink of water. The players should know that leaving won't break the game or ruin anyone's experience. They should feel free to leave at any time, or ask to speak to you/your co-facilitator in private if they have any questions."

Remind players they should keep their phones out and on as sources of light, to refer to their character sheets as needed.

At this point, you are ready to start character creation.

Sections of Life

Players publically choose one of the following character concepts. There are a total of nine concepts, which provides a lot to choose from. Gather around in a circle, at a table, or in some other logical configuration. The person most recently to have been in the woods gets first pick of characters, and then character selection should continue on from that person's right.

- 1. The Teacher (A skeptic, interested in unveiling Slenderman)
- 2. The Champion (A skeptic, interested in conquering Slenderman)
- 3. The Inspector (A skeptic, interested in protecting Slenderman)
- 4. The Promoter (Agnostic, interested in unveiling Slenderman)
- 5. The Crafter (Agnostic, interested in conquering Slenderman)
- 6. The Healer (Agnostic, interested in protecting Slenderman)
- 7. The Counselor (A believer, interested in unveiling Slenderman)
- 8. The Fieldmarshal (A believer, interested in conquering Slenderman)
- 9. The Protector (A believer, interested in protecting Slenderman)

Once all of the players have chosen their preferred character type, pass out the character sheets. There is one for every character type.

Players should then collaboratively decide where the game's setting will take place in the narrative. Encourage the players to play close to home, for maximum creep factor. Also note that Slenderman's mythos largely depends on being outdoors, in a rural, woodsy, realistic setting with lots of trees. In other words, the game requires this kind of setting, at least as written in this booklet. Other than that, the setting is open to the players' choice. Do you play adjacent to a local cemetery? In a deserted spot along route 69? In the woods out back the creepy old abandoned mansion? A hiking trail near a local playground?

Players should fill out their character sheets, starting with the basics: A real first name, and a forum username. Also include age, where they're from, racial identity, abilities, disabilities, and more. See the character sheets section for more info.

Once your players have a rough sense of who they are, they should complete the **yarn ball exercise**:

• At the beginning, all eleven players should sit in a circle. The player on the GM's left has a yarn ball (or other object) which is passed to another player. The two players between whom the yarn ball is passed develop a relationship. Then the second player passes the ball to someone else and they develop a relationship. This should go on until everybody has a relationship with someone else. If desired, players can each have a thirty-second scene to establish the way their most important relationship works.

Then, and only then, should the players write down the sensitive information. They should do so in this order:

1. Privately, on one notecard, each player should write down one "light secret." Examples might include:

- Slenderman is more than just a mere curiosity to me
- I despair because my family is all dead due to Slenderman
- I actually have a completely different goal than I said
- I want to find Slenderman to get my child back
- 2. Privately, on a separate notecard, each player should write down one "dark secret." Examples might include:
 - I am Slenderman
 - I am a fraud, and actually don't believe/believe in Slenderman
 - I am the person who posted this invitation on the forum
 - I am actually a troll and I publish on 19 different accounts on the forum
 - I want to find Slenderman to sell my neighbor's child to Slenderman
- 3. Then the players will answer the following question on a separate notecard, which they show briefly to the facilitator, and keep: **What do you fear most about Slenderman?**Examples might include:
 - Being eaten alive
 - Losing my child
 - Never having a moment of peace
 - Death
 - Not dying
- 4. Take five seconds to show the player to your left the light secret, and the player to the right your dark secret. These people now have this information about you, and it may be brought up in game.
- 5. After sharing your secrets, and reading other people's, write down **who you think posted the original forum topic** (suggesting you all meet tonight) on a notecard. Keep all your notecards with your character sheet in a safe place.

Character Sheet: The Teacher

A skeptic interested in unveiling Slenderman

My child, my Lars... he is gone. Taken, from his bed. The only thing that we found was a scrap of black clothing. It feels like cotton, but it is softer... thicker. Lars came into my bedroom yesterday, screaming at the top of his lungs that "The angel is outside!" I asked him what he was talking about, and he told me some nonsense fairy story about Der Großmann.

First name:
Username:
Time on forum:
Age & Gender:
Where are you from?:
Choose 1: How do you feel about this adventure? Obsessive, because you have more than an academic interest in Slenderman
Intrigued, because you're developing some unique theories about Slenderman
Fascinated, because you want to use Slenderman

to educate people about urban legends

Character Sheet: The Champion

A skeptic, interested in conquering Slenderman

Having seen him, I acted without even knowing what was going on. Punches were thrown. Long black tendrils whipped all around. The last thing I remember was being held tightly above the ground and thrown against a wall. That's when I blacked out. When I came to, my wife was in tears. I had three cracked ribs. My son was gone. The slender man had my son and there was nothing I could do. But I knew he was going to come back, and that was when I would get him.

First name:	
Username:	
Time on forum:	
Age & Gender:	
Where are you from?:	-
Choose 1: How do you feel about this adventure Embarrassed, because you don't actually ha of how to conquer Slenderman	
Delighted, because you have a thirst for adve	enture
Enthusiastic, because you have a plot to deb Slenderman in order to advance skeptical though	

Character Sheet: The Inspector

A skeptic, interested in protecting Slenderman
Throughout the rest of the night, the "slender" man was
everywhere within my dreams. He was a bit curious though. He
only ever seemed to cautiously hide behind trees. Only in the
original photo was he completely exposed. Even subconsciously
I wished I hadn't moved next to a forest knowing he could be
lurking. Watching me. Analyzing me.

First name:	
Username:	
Time on forum:	
Age & Gender:	
Where are you from?:	_
Choose 1: How do you feel about this adventur Satisfied; you're sure that while Slenderman exist, you want the mythos to continue to grow.	doesn'
Bored; you don't believe in Slenderman, and content to let sleeping dogs lie.	l you're
Important; if Slenderman exists, you will do verification necessary to prevent Slenderman from becomin sideshow spectacle	

Character Sheet: The Promoter

Agnostic, interested in unveiling Slenderman

"We don't know what he is exactly, but we know for sure he isn't human. People who have seen him describe him just as you saw him, but he is sometimes seen with black tentacles emerged from his back. He is a fearsome creature, and kills most likely for the fun of it. Now, let me give you a little backstory on the Slender Man. One of the first recorded instances of him was back in the mid-1500s in Germany. A woodcut artist by the name of Hans Frekenberg created a piece that displayed a creature that looks not unlike the Slender Man. It was discovered in Halstbugh Castle in 1883. Here's what it looks like." He slid one of the pictures over to me, one that depicted a knight dueling with a strange, humanoid creature with multiple arms and legs.

numanoid creature with multiple arms and legs.
First name:
Username:
Time on forum:
Age & Gender:
Where are you from?:
Choose 1: How do you feel about this adventure? Irritated; you don't really want to be here, but you'll make the best of it
Annoyed, but don't want to miss out
Enthusiastic, because either way, you're likely to

make some money out of this.

Character Sheet: The Crafter Character Sheet: The Healer Agnostic, interested in conquering Slenderman Agnostic, interested in protecting Slenderman Suddenly, trapped in his grasp so tight, / You struggle to break As Nicole walked into her sister's hospital room the first time, she yourself free. / He laughs and he gurgles and he screeches with thought she had spied the silhouette of a man in the window. glee, / He turns your head for you to see. / Your children are That, she knew, was impossible. Her sister's room was on the crying though their eyes are removed, / They collapse, still and third story of the hospital...It was a tall man wearing a black suit, silent. with a blank face. First name: _____ First name: Username: Username: _____ Time on forum: Time on forum: _____ Age & Gender: Age & Gender: Where are you from?: Where are you from?: Choose 1: How do you feel about this adventure? Choose 1: How do you feel about this adventure? Cheerful; you little doubt everyone here is on the Serene; you feel like you won't be ruffled by same page with you as regards to Slenderman. anything you see here tonight. Insignificant; you feel as if your colleagues here Helpless; you feel as if the tide of your life has tonight are all on board against Slenderman. forced you here. Trusting; you know Slenderman is sentient and __ Aware; whether or not Slenderman exists, you want thoughtful, and has a plan. to use what you find in an art project.

Character Sheet: The Counselor

Believer, interested in unveiling Slenderman

He saw the kids sitting next to the tree and the same man standing in front of them as he seen in the woods. Chris turned around to see the kids and the smaller tree missing. He backed up, tripping over a fallen branch. He remembered that there was no tree by the slide. Chris looked up to see a blank face staring back down at him. He went to scream but nothing came out. He tried to run but the man's branch-like hand was grasping his foot. There was no escaping...

First name:	
Username:	
Time on forum:	-
Age & Gender:	-
Where are you from?:	_
Choose 1: How do you feel about this adventur Anxious; Slenderman is an entity not to be to with	
Thoughtful; you are curious to see what Slei is like in the cold harsh light of day	nderman
Amused, because all these skeptics are so s You'll show them.	silly.

Character Sheet: The Fieldmarshal

Believer, interested in conquering Slenderman

The tall man stood in a clearing, dressed as a nobleman, all in black. Shadows lay over him, dark as a cloudy midnight. He had many arms, all long and boneless as snakes, all sharp as swords, and they writhed like worms on nails. He did not speak, but made his intentions known.

First name:	
Username:	
Time on forum:	
Age & Gender:	
Where are you from?:	
Choose 1: How do you feel about this adventure Confident; conquering monsters is your primagoal in life, and this will be another that bites the	ary
Sexy; you find it strangely alluring to exert yo power over the unknown	ur
Hostile; you find the disbelief of the skeptics impedes the accomplishment of your goals.	

Character Sheet: The Protector
Believer, interested in protecting Slenderman
If I learned anything from that ordeal, it's that we may never know who, or what the Slender Man is exactly, and where he's going to show up next. But I give this warning to you, dear reader. Beware the Slender Man, for the Slender Man watches us all.
First name:
Username:
Time on forum:
Age & Gender:
Where are you from?:
Choose 1: How do you feel about this adventure? Depressed; Slenderman's enemies and detractors are arming against him, and I wish there was something I could do about it
Rage; I want to right the wrongs committed against Slenderman
Energetic; I want to see if there's a way that Slenderman can be less frightening through therapy

So, what now?

So you've gone through all of the scenes and your players are sufficiently creeped out. Time to wind down! Debrief for this game consists of three parts: the epilogue, the deep breath, and the conversation

- The Epilogue: Each player gets a thirty-second monologue about what happened after the
 night they all met at the playground. Did Slenderman show the next night? Was one of
 them found with their intestines wrapped around their throat like a noose? Did they catch
 the prankster? It's ok if accounts differ, but all monologues should include who each player
 thought was the original poster.
- The Deep Breath: Pretty self-explanatory. Players take three seven-eleven count deep breaths to relax.
- The Conversation: This is the time to go around the table and cheer on your fellow players. Was there a particularly intense moment? Did someone have an awesome monologue? Do you like your GM's face? Talk about it for a couple of minutes and take some time to come back to a world where Slenderman isn't real and sending creepy texts to lure you to a playground. Probably.

Sharing Slenderman

This is the standard version of this game. A large-text version of this game for low-vision persons is available here: http://tinyurl.com/largetextWFS.

An audio version of this game is also available. Click here to download all the audio files: http://tinyurl.com/audioWFS

So Long: Credits

For the game's inspiration, our source material was the Slender Man meme (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slender_Man) as well as the Samuel Beckett Play, Waiting for Godot (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waiting_for_Godot).

For the character types, our source material was the Keirsey Temperament Sorter - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keirsey_Temperament_Sorter

Character Flavor Text came from a variety of different sources. Each is listed below.

Text for "The Teacher": http://creepypasta.wikia.com/wiki/Der Gro%C3%9Fmann

Text for "The Champion": http://creepypasta.wikia.com/wiki/Tall. Thin_and_Faceless? action=render

Text for "The Inspector": http://creepypasta.wikia.com/wiki/Tall, Thin_and_Faceless? action=render

Text for "The Promoter": http://creepypasta.wikia.com/wiki/The_Slenderman_Cometh? action=render

Text for "The Crafter": https://www.tumblr.com/tagged/schlankwald?page=3

Text for "The Healer": http://creepypasta.wikia.com/wiki/The_Blank_Face?action=render

Text for "The Counselor": http://creepypasta.wikia.com/wiki/Follow_the_Leader 2action=render

Text for "The Fieldmarshal": http://creepypasta.wikia.com/wiki/The Tall Man

Text for "The Protector": http://creepypasta.wikia.com/wiki/The_Slenderman_Cometh

WARMTH BY WENDY GORMAN

Finding warmth in comforting rituals, such as knitting and food.

Warmth



By Wendy Gorman

Spending the past four years in Minnesota has taught me things about cold that I truly did not believe were possible. That ten degrees is appropriate weather to walk to the bank in, but 0 degrees is not. That yes, cancelling school because of cold is sometimes a necessity. That scarves are not merely a fashion statement. I also learned about other, more intangible forms of coldness, like the cold, emptiness of loneliness, the sharp, icy feel of frustration, the chilling feeling of inadequacy. But what I learned most of all is how to appreciate warmth. Hot showers, hot drinks, quiet evenings spent with friends, and someone else's warm neck to bury your nose into. I wanted to be able to explore warmth further, as it relates to the physical,

mental, spiritual, and emotional, and for me, nothing says warmth like sitting down with friends, hot drinks, and a big, lovely pile of yarn.

Sit down with a group of 2-4 people you want to spend about 2 hours with. Someone, possibly you, needs to be willing to facilitate this gathering.

Several objects are necessary for this meeting.

Everyone should have yarn, of whatever quality, color, and texture they prefer. My preference is for fluffy, unusual looking yarns, since my fashion tastes run a little towards the dramatic, and I love the feelings of soft yarn sliding over my fingers as I shape that yarn into a scarf. You will also all need a desire to connect with other humans, and knitting needles (or crochet hooks, if you really must). While you may do this at any time, I am usually moved to knit in the colder months, and find that fall and winter are the best times for cozy knitting parties.

Make sure the people you are sitting down with are in an appropriate mental space to enjoy an

open, infimate discussion about warmth. If someone feels they are not up to the task, let them go. This can only work with everyone on board. Do not try to convince anyone to do this if they do not feel up to it. For example, if I had a big project at work due the next day, and I needed time to prepare for it, that would not be a good time for me to participate, since I would be distracted the whole time.

The space you host this gathering in should be warm and cozy, for whatever definition of cozy you desire. If it were me, I'd make sure there were lots of warm, snuggly blankets that people could wrap around their legs, plenty of hot tea and hot chocolate, and maybe some homemade cinnamon rolls, perhaps with my Wailin' Jenny's Pandora station on in the background, and hopefully a cat or two to sit on people's laps and get tangled up in the yarn.

Someone in your group needs to know how to knit (or crochet) prior to starting this gathering. If not

who can teach you to knit prior to organizing one of teach the ones who don't. Hopefully this won't take everyone knows how to knit, then the ones that do, technicalities, then at least everyone has learned a new skill and enjoyed the company of people they these gatherings. I would suggest that anyone new because despite having knitted for years, I still only to knitting start with making a scarf, since they are intimate space I hope this will be, I will admit that I simple, require no fancy turns, and are beautifully too long, but if the time gets eaten up by knitting hopefully convey the basics. Also, here are some step-by-step instructions. Barring that, ask around know how to knit straight rows with the knit stitch. want to spend time with. If no one knows how to your friend group, and see if you have someone useful in cold weather. In the spirit of the honest, have never knitted anything other than a scarf, knit, here is a handy YouTube video that will Nothing more.

Once everyone is happily knitting (or crocheting), and is settled with their tea or cinnamon roll or hot cider, whoever is facilitating this event should begin the discussion of warmth. A complete list of warmth-related discussion prompts is at the end of these instructions. The facilitator must begin by sharing what they turn to in times of physical coldness. If I were the first facilitator of this activity, I would share that I love nothing more than my soft purple cat blanket, and drinking hot cider with cinnamon whiskey in it, perhaps while reading a nice fanfiction.

The facilitator will then pass the sheet of warmth related discussion topics to the person sitting next them. This person will read the next question/topic aloud, and then pass it along to the next person, if there is one, and so on and so forth, passing the sheet around in a roughly circular manner. If someone is unable to put down their knitting for fear of losing a stitch, a more confident knitter can hold the sheet in front of them, so that

they may read without disturbing their stitches. If someone merely needs a few seconds to finish a row, be gracious. Allow them to finish before starting the next question.

compassionate self, listen with respect and caring to times when you must be vulnerable with the people varying levels of intensity. Some of them will be easy thought and introspection to answer. There may be others and yourself, about where you find and seek the people around you, and try to be honest, with your gathering, you should. Put forward your most together should be playing as their kindest, most sitting near you. Therefore, the people gathered whatever kindnesses you can extend to those in to answer, and some of them may require more The topics covered on the sheet will be of information with you, treat that information with understanding selves that day- meaning that warmth. When someone else shares personal care and respect.

In addition to being kind to your gathering, remember to be kind to yourself during this meeting. If your stitches are looking a little lopsided, or you feel that your conversation isn't as sparkling as it could be, try not to stress. Be kind to yourself. Treat yourself as you would a dearly beloved friend, and support yourself as you engage in open, perhaps vulnerable, conversation with a group of people.

Depending on how chatty your group is, and how many of you there are, you may not get to all the questions. That's fine. You may breeze through the questions in under two hours. That's fine also. When your group is approaching the two hour marker, stop, and thank each other for sharing in the experience. Clear up any lingering questions or comments, finish off your beverage, swipe the last crumbs off of the cookie tray. If you didn't know each other previously, this is an excellent time to exchange phone numbers, email addresses, twitter handles, etc.

Probably, by the end of the group, no one will have a finished project, if they are just starting out. If by some miracle you do have a finished scarf or hat or baby blanket or what have you, that is wonderful! If you need more than two hours to complete something (as I most certainly would) feel free to continue knitting, or to just let the unfinished product remind you of your warmest self. If you do manage to finish something, within the time constraint or not, consider using your finished item as a way to spread warmth on to someone else. Perhaps give it as a gift. Perhaps donate it to a homeless shelter.

Perhaps just simply tie it to a tree with a note saying "Use me if you're cold!"

Warmth Discussion

- What do you do to try and make others feel warmer?
- How do you seek warmth when you are physically cold?
- Describe a time in your past when you felt emotionally warm.
- What does warmth mean to you?
- In what ways would you like to be warmer?
- What activity (or activities) causes you to feel intellectual warmth?
- Is spiritual warmth important to you? If yes, how so?
- Describe your perfect comfort food.
- What causes you to seek out emotional warmth?
- Describe a person who makes you feel warmth, of any kind, on a regular basis.

A WAY OUT BY LORIS CASAGRANDI

Play a member of a group who is not more comfortable in the group status quo. Change yourself by fighting back bad habits and social pressure.



Thanks

To Evan Torner, who gave me some good advice for tutoring me.

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To Simone Micucci, who make me curios about social groups.

Disclaimer

It's important to notice that social groups are a good things, but sometimes they could be bad or could have bad sides: this game is about a bad group and his bad sides. Not every group leader is a little dictator, not every group has distorted mechanisms, but i think that's simpler to make you aware and conscious of the bad sides while picturing and playing a bad group.

As a matter of fact, while you're playing this game, you're not going out of a closet the group as made for you, but a closet you have made for yourself.

What is this game about?

This game is about people in a group, social anxiety, social pressure and the difficulties of step out of the closet and doing something that is taboo inside the social group of your choice.

What do you need for playing?

First of all you need some friends, going from 3 to 5, then you need 10 coins from every friends, it's a good choice to take 2 of the biggest kind, 2 of the smallest kind e other 6 of the same small kind. In the end you need an open space, something where you and your friend could put some chair or stand still at two step back from a center.

Don't forget to take some piece of paper or post-it, and some pencils or pens.

Set-up

Before starting the game make a little brainstorming about how you are going to play, the set-up phase should last less then 20 minute.

Think about the tone of the game, if you want something with bleed and drama you should take a realistic group like a group of teenager in high school, if you want something funny try with a group of pirates or choppers, if you want something serious try with a group of religious or political activists.

First game

If it's the first time you play, you can skip the Question 1 and choose one of this suggested groups:

- **Drama:** A group of friend for a long time. They met each other during the high school. Now, they see each other regularly but for some reason the group is not alive anymore. They hang out together just for habit.
 - The leader want to maintain the group united but, obsessed by the status quo, is unable to find out new activities to make the group interesting or to let the group go.
 - Some good rules could be: "We do everything together", "We see each other at least once a week".
- Funny: A group of pirate on a old vessel. They just started their piracy activity and their out of money. Every scene can take place in a different place where the group arrived by ship. Probably the Captain is dumb, there could be some non-sense rule like "you can walk the plank only for diving and if the other pirates judges your performance", "you should never take a bath", "we can drink only rum", eccetera. Probably the members of the group are also dumb and they have stupid rivalry with each other like "Jackson is a thief I think he stole my best wooden leg", "Andrew is my top command His arrogant, i hate him but i never told him".
- Serious: You're activist: ambiental, religious, political. Choose a subject you like. Your leader is a tyrant because he thinks that "the end justifies the means", this could probably be a rule of the group. Probably he is a control maniac and everything have to be done exactly like he says. The member of the group shares the cause but probably their not extremist, they just want to promote and defend some rights.

So, where do you start? First you need to create a social group of people together for a reason. During all the set-up you will answering some question about you and your group.

Question 1: "Why you are all together?"

It could be that you are all members of the same group because you have the same hobby, you like playing rpg, you like take pictures, you share the same political idea or something natural like "we are/was in the same class in the high school" or something like a little organization like a gang of gangster.

Therefore, because this is a game, we are stating that "your social group is not good" and now you have

to find out why. In every game, one reason because the group is not good for you is: "your social group has a leader. He doesn't want changes and he defends the status quo because the status quo is the identity of the group". How the status quo is depends from your type of group.

Question 2: "Why the group is not good for you?"

Starting from the fact that you have a strong leader, the one fighting for the status quo, choose one of you too take that role, and continue your brainstorming saying something about the group that answer the question above. From these suggestions the leader, who has power of marking a choices, will create

five rules that constitutes the social identity of the group and everyone will write them on their sheet of paper.

Now, when all the five rules are written in the stone, all players write them down in their sheet of paper and write near every sentence a size of a coin(be careful, if you have two coins of a size, you can use it only two times). For the purpose of the game the bigger is the type of the coin, the bigger is the difficult for overcoming it, so the bigger is the relevance that this rules have for your characters while he is think about "this group is not good because...".

Everyone will remain with five coins, you'll use them for the question number 4.

Rules Examples

Example 1:

- Player 1: "I think I'm not comfortable with the group because I don't feel free to say my opinion and disagree with the leader or other members"
- The Leader: "Fine. We will add this rule: you cannot openly disagree with the group. Oh, and you know what? If you like it, I'll also add: the leader always has the last word."

Example 2:

- *Player 2:* "I think we should attack bigger ships, Yaaaar!"
- The Leader: "The pirates attack only easy pray, this is one rule".

When you are inside a group, you always have a role. Always. You may not know it consciously but that does not mean that you cannot feel it in some other way, like social pressure.

Question 3: "What is your role in the group?"

Choose one, you can be everything you want, here I left you some general suggestion so you can be inspired: the joker, the one pragmatic one (the implementer), the enthusiastic one that always propose something new to do (the shaper), the organized one (the finisher), and so on. Also decide a name for your character and write it down on your piece of paper. Obviously the role of the leader is "the leader".

Moving from question 3, everyone's been part of a group at some points during his life, because even a couple of two friend could be a group with a leader. And when you are part of a group for a long time you're never only attached with the group itself, you have some bonds that make you care about the individual member of the group. Probably your best friend or your lover is the leader, or the black sheep was your best friend, or everything you like.

Question 4: "Which are your relationship with the members of the group?"

A relationship is composed of a bond and statement. The bond is the type of relationship, like friends, lovers or enemies, the statement is something that describes something particular about your bond with this person.

So you choose one person, and you write it down on your sheet his name and the bond. If is something like "I'm in love with..." you can just write it down, if it is something more official like "I'm the girlfriend of ..." just ask your friend before write it down and ask him if it is okay with your decision. And every time you write down a bond with a person, you have to add a statement about something that puts social pressure on you.

Here some example:

"John is my best-friend – I don't like how he speaks to me when we are in the group but I never say it to him."
"Mr. Smee is my friend – I'm not able to clean the ship deck when he is around."

Everyone, even the leader, have to write down 5 of this bonds with a statement, and write near the statement the size of a coin; as always the bigger is the type of the coin representing the bond, the bigger is the value and the difficult to break it.

You can have only one personal bond with the leader, because you have already five bonds with him, in fact every group rule is also a bond with the leader. You must have at least one bond with every member of the group.

Now, you can start playing, go in an open space, put something to mark a center and everybody makes two steps back starting from here. It's good if you're trying to create a regular geometric shape like a triangle, a square, a circle and sit here on a chair. (I think is good also to sit on the floor or stand still but this could make the game a little bit easier or more difficult.)

Now you put your right hand facing up and put on your fingertips your ten coins. You can stack the coin on a fingertip or more, make sure they don't fall down. When everybody is ready, you can start the game.

Playing the game

It's time to play.

First the Leader describe where the group is reunited in this moment, he is framing the scene, it's a place where all the group is together, they could be doing something specific, like playing football or chess, or they could just be together and chatting. It's better if in this fictional space the members could chat in couple without the other hearing them at least sometimes.

Then, starting by the Leader, every member describes in a sentence how is passing his time: talking with someone, playing something, etcetera. Then the player sitting to the left of the Leader looks at his written bonds, choose one statement with a person how want to break and yell out the name of this person, every group rule is a bond with the group, so is a bond with the Leader. The player you named is your destination.

After you said the name, you stand up, and you walk toward the center. When you are on the center, you close your hand with the coins in a fist. If no coins fall of your hand, you walk toward the player. If you're player are very good with dexterity or the

How to correctly use the coins

- you can put them only on your fingertips.
- your fingers can't touch each other.
- a coin on a fingertips can't touch another finger or coins on other fingertips
- while playing, you can't lay your hands on your legs or anywhere.

If someone break this rule, apply the rule "if a coin fall down in any other moment".



dexterity level if very different, you can add more difficulties to the walk, like walking two times in circle around the center before walk to the destination.

While the player is walking, the other players should talk to him, tell jokes and make noise. Their trying to break his focus so he would drop the money. This represents the social pressure of the group.

When you are near the player, you read out loud the statement you want to break, you take a coin of the size of this statement from your closed hand, and you put it over one of his fingertips. If no coin falls of the hand of your friend, you've done it. You describe how you approach your friend in the fiction and what you say to him. You have to say something that contradict the statement that you're trying to broke in some ways, if you never doing something to him, so do it, or if you always doing something for him don't do it or tell him that things have to change.

005

During this phase the players out of the scene are the referee of the game, so pay attention if your competitive friends take away the finger, while another is trying to putting his coin on a finger!

Now return at your place, cancel the broken statement and put the money on your fingertips another time. It is time for the player on your left to play.

The game proceeds clockwise and when the Leader ended his turn, he has to describe another place because this time together his finished and the group will meet again in another day. If in the day before no coins felt down, the members of the group are working in the direction of breaking down the status quo, so every player (even the leader) choose one coin and remove it from the game.

What happens if a coin fall down?

- If the coins fall down while you are closing your hand at the center of the circle or while you were not sitting, the leader of the group has seen you going around the place and, in some ways, distracts you from your objective, describe how the leader stops you. The leader take one money from his hand and give it to you. The group won over your will.
- If the coins fall down while you are putting one of them on the hand of another player, the bond with him is too strong, you can narrate how you approach your friend but he tells how wasn't able to overcome the statement you wanted to break.
- If the coins fall down in any other moment, an habit has grown stronger in you, you describe what happened, it could also be something psychological, and every member of the group give you a coins of the type of a bond they have with you. You take one of the money with the bigger size and you remove it from the game.

What's happening during the game?

When you left your place, you're trying to breaking the habit of not-doing or doing something.

When you are in the middle of the group, you're battling with your inner anxiety and with the social pressure of the group.

When you are in front of your friend and you're putting the coin on his fingertips, you're trying to overcome the social pressure made by your bonds with your friend/the group member, so you can break a statement that you no longer like.

Remember, when your character contradicts his statements, he's performing a sort of rite, you have to believe that the action is meaningful so you can have a grasp on the meaningful part of the game. Your characters is doing this action like a "rite of passage", for assert himself out of the closet, you have to believe in him to discover if and how he will change during the game. You fail in obtain something? No problem, be a fan of your character, you'll have another possibility the next turn to make him step out of the closet.

When a "if the coins fall down" rules applies, until all the indication are made out no other falling coin trigger an "if the coins fall down" rules.

What happens if a leader's coin falls down?

If you're the leader, you can break a personal bonds or re-affirm and blame a member who break a rule of the group.

Also, for a leader every group rules is a bond with every member and he chooses one if i want to re-affirm one of it. But you can also fail, so:

- If the coins fall down while you are closing your hand at the center of the circle or while you were not sitting, your faith in one of the rules faltered. You choose which one. Then choose one member, he's the one who saw you during this moment, he describes what you've done and he remove one of his coins from the game.
- If the coins fall down while you are putting one of them on the hand of another player, the bond with him is too strong, you can narrate how you approach your friend but he tells how wasn't able to overcome the statement you wanted to break.
- If the coins fall down in any other moment, the members of your group broke one of the rules with a collective action. They decide one rules, you decide how they broke it. Every player give you a money of the size of a bond they have with you and you remove one coin of the bigger size from the game.

006

One rule exception

if you're walking and one of your friend drops some coins, you arrive at the center and close your hand(if you haven't done it already), and wait until he put his coin on his hands. Then you finished you return as always.

When your turn is finished, you apply on your friend the rule "if a coin fall down in any other moment".

End Game

The game ends when one player have finished all the coins or all the bonds and group rules have been deleted.

If it is a normal member of the group, it's free from the logic of a "wrong" group and he could choose to stay or to leave the group. If he chooses to stay, every member of the group decides if he sees him like a member of the group or a black sheep.

If it is the leader, he obtained his goals: make the group stronger, the group is complete and no-one is left behind. However the Leader is now conscious of his power over his friends and can choose to be a conscious tyrant or change the way he behave and become a spiritual and democratic guide.

The person who wins the game stands up, going in the middle of the circle and tells how his story ended. Remember that in the end you have changed, so you have to describe what is changed in you, it could be something in your behavior or you could make a direct talk in front of the other member of the group or both.

If you like, you could go on with the game, "the winner" doesn't play. When only two player remain with coins, the game must stop.

Some of you might ask: "but, i always have a bonds written in my piece of paper, did i won?" Yes, you don't really need to break all the bonds, just enough for obtain the necessary esteem. And while the members of the group change, also the bonds changes, sometimes the things simply change, you only have to be aware of it.

Debriefing

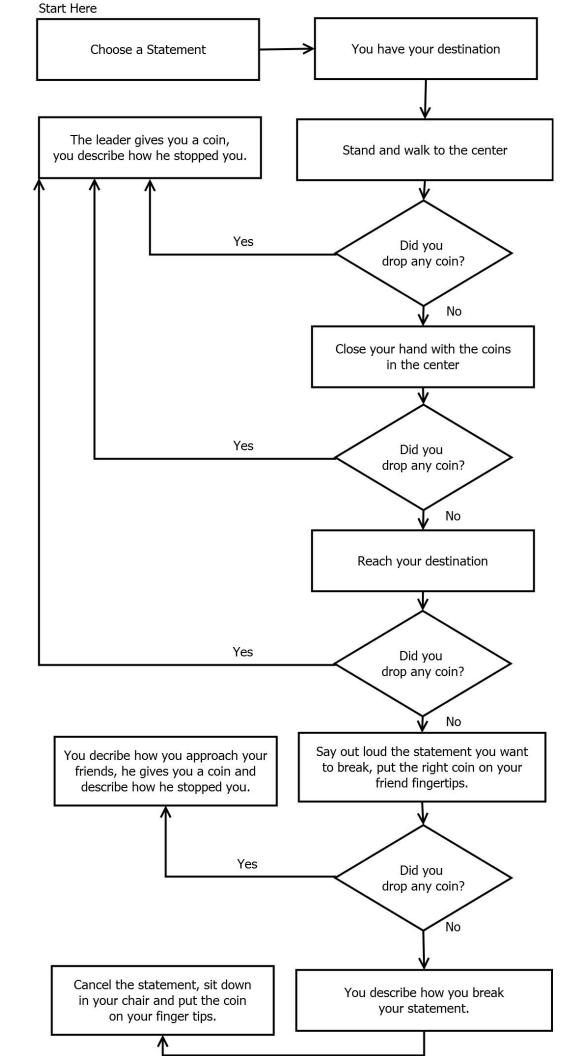
Talk about the experience you lived. Everyone of you in turn talk about what does he think of the story of his character during the game. You could say, for example, what are the moment where something's gone wrong but you was really caring about.

At the same time, you should ask your self and answer loud to this question:

How did you come out of your closet? Have you been aggresive? Did you focus your attention on the statements instead of the bonds? If you answered "No" to one of this question, you wasn't assertive. Ask your self why you wasn't assertive.

Assertiveness

"a form of behavior characterized by a confident declaration or affirmation of a statement without need of proof; this affirms the person's rights or point of view without either aggressively threatening the rights of another (assuming a position of dominance) or submissively permitting another to ignore or deny one's rights or point of view" - Wikipedia



THE WOODS BY DANIELLE GOUDEAU

A collaborative game about two travelers lost in the woods and the nature of fairy tales.

THE WOODS

DANIELLE GOUDEAU

A COLLABORATIVE GAME ABOUT TWO TRAVELERS LOST IN THE WOODS AND THE NATURE OF FAIRY TALES.

General Information:

Players:

4 players and one GM

Time:

1.5 - 2 hours. 30min of rules and collaborative world building and 1-1.5hrs of play.

Structure:

The plot of this game is simple. Two travelers are stranded at night in forbidding woods and take shelter at some strangers' fire. The once conceit is that in whatever culture you are a part of, telling stories at night is a custom, and each character will take it in turn to tell a story throughout the game.

Rules:

There are no rules for resolving conflicts. Players are encouraged to agree upon an outcome that best moves the narrative forward for their characters. In the case of an impasse, the GM will settle disputes.

There are rules for telling stories.

- Each story should last no more than 5-10 minutes.
- Each character has a type of story they want to tell, and a way they prefer stories to work or end.
- Once or twice (depending on character) a player may, change a type of detail about the story in order to move it in their prefered direction. The tale teller must then integrate this into the story
 - Ex: "The evil stepmother forced Cinderella to work because she was jealous of her." "Wait! You're mistaken, Cinderella was lazy and spoiled, and the stepmother wanted to instill in her a work ethic." "Yes, I remember now. . . "
 - Ex: "The giant was about to eat Jack, but Jack had a plan." "Yes! I've heard this story, wasn't Jack a dead shot with a sling?" "That's correct!"

Be sure to leave enough space in between stories to interact and pursue goals in character.

Before you begin:

- Choose characters. Since they all have secrets, do not show your sheet to another player.
 - The Baker: A forthright and stalwart baker, off to seek their fortune.
 - The Runaway: The baker's companion, fleeing something.
 - The Stern Woodsman: One of the woodsmen, a serious individual.
 - The Jolly Woodsman: One of the woodsmen, a laughing jokester.
- Decide on a common genre. This will be helpful to keep a consistent feel when you collaborate. Think about things like mood, time period and culture, but don't get bogged down in specifics.
 - Ex: Modern American horror, Ye Olde European fantasy, Arabian Nights
 - Whatever you choose, everyone should feel comfortable at least attempting stories in that genre.
- Split off into two groups, the woodsmen and the travelers, to work on your collaborative questions. You should be unable to hear each other.

Beginning of Play:

- Each player should briefly describe their character's appearance.
- The GM may sat a mood, describing the scenery.
- The travelers stumble into the firelight and the game is on.

End of Play:

- Play ends when either the travelers decide to resume their journey or everyone turns in for the night.
- The GM will then give a brief epilogue.

The GM:

Your job is divided up into pre, during, and post game.

Pre-Game:

Explain the story telling rules:

Each person will tell a 2-10min story, usually based on a fairy tale. They have a theme and also a note on what type of stories they like. Other characters, who like other types of stories can introduce confounding notes (type of note specified on character sheet) to try and change the story.

Assign characters, making sure people do not see other peoples' character sheets.

Chair the discussion to pick a consensus genre.

Place the travelers in one room or area and the woodsmen in another.

Help each group answer their pre-game questions if they need it. Make sure they tell you the answers, so you know what shape the overall plot has.

Make sure every player has at least a rough idea for their story or understands their theme.

During Game:

Establish opening setting elements.

Resolve disputes (unlikely to come up).

Feel free to add setting notes during play to help them mood, since you know everyone's shared backstory. This can be useful for establishing consensus reality or nudging the plot.

Post-Game:

Explain the setup to the Travelers/Mortals.

Ask the mythic creatures to describe how they changed, and what blessing or curse (if any) they bestow upon the Travelers/Mortals.

The Baker:

Story:

You left a quiet life in a small town to seek a fortune, bringing along your (friend/sibling/lover) The Runaway. You were certain that strength, common sense and virtue would see you safely through the Dark Woods, and started the venture cheerfully, with a spirit of adventure.

Things went sour when you and the Runaway had a fight, with things said that might not be able to be taken back. The next day a group of bandits attacked you, stealing your mule, cart and supplies; and leaving you stranded. You fought them off as best you could, but took a blow to the temple. Leaning upon your compatriot's arm you staggered along the track until a fain light beckoned through the trees.

Now you exhaustedly stumble into a small camp.

Questions to answer collaboratively with the Runaway:

- What is your name?
- What is your close relationship to your fellow traveler?
- · What has soured in your relationship?

Questions to answer either with the Runaway or on your own:

Why have you traveled into the dark woods? What great quest are you running toward?

Motivations:

- Repair your relationship with The Runaway.
- Get help escaping the woods to pursue your quest.

The story you know:

A bully is taken down a peg by a trickster figure. (ex: Br'er rabbit, coyote)

Changes:

Twice during someone else's story you can choose to change the direction by introducing a plot complication which the teller must integrate:

Can change: motivations, small details.

What you want out of stories: virtue / moral lessons

The Runaway:

Story:

You lived a hard, miserable life in a small town. So when your (friend/sibling/lover) the Baker left to seek their fortune, you jumped at the chance to escape and start over. You were certain that after what you've experienced, you had nothing to fear in the Dark Woods. You started the venture determined, with a new sense of freedom.

Things went sour when you and The Baker had a fight, with things said that might not be able to be taken back. The next day a group of bandits attacked you, stealing your mule, cart and supplies; and leaving you stranded. You fought them viciously, but were overpowered and The Baker took a blow to the temple. Supporting your compatriot's weight you staggered along the track until a faint light beckoned through the trees.

Now you exhaustedly stumble into a small camp.

Questions to answer with the Baker:

- What is your name?
- What is your close relationship to the Baker?
- · What has soured in your relationship?

Questions to answer either with the Baker or on your own:

· Why have you traveled into the dark woods? What are you running away from?

Motivations:

- · Resolve your relationship with The Baker
- · Find a new, better life.

The story you know:

Three siblings try and get something from a witch. She punishes two and rewards one. (ex: three princes off to seek their fortune, two rude sisters and one kind one)

Changes:

Twice during someone else's story you can choose to change the direction by introducing a plot complication which the teller must integrate:

Can change: Punishments and Rewards / Locations.

What you want out of stories: The character you identify with to be powerful.

The Jolly Woodsman (The Trickster):

Story:

For centuries you have haunted the Dark Woods. You nature changes as stories about you come and go, but always takes the form of a trickster, one who uses cleverness and humor to win. You share your home with many other such creatures, including a wicked old witch, with whom you have a complicated relationship. Your feud is older than most mortal's lives, but has aged like brandy into a type of companionable sniping friendship.

Life for you is joyful, getting in and out of scrapes or playing practical jokes; but mortals don't come through the Dark Woods much anymore, and you get bored. So when you saw two mortals traveling in their sad donkey cart along the path, you and the witch decided to entertain yourselves. You placed a bet about what each of you could get them to do. Then, disguised with illusion as brigands, you attacked and stranded them in the forest.

Changing form to a pair of woodcutters, you set your warm fire's glow like a lure, to tempt them in for an evening of entertainment. However, when The Runaway staggered into the clearing, bearing their companions weight upon their shoulder, you were struck at once by love at first sight.

Questions to answer with The Witch / Stern Woodsman:

- What is your name?
- What is your bet with The Witch?
- Why do you feud with The Witch?

Questions to answer privately:

• What attracted you to The Runaway? (you can decide in game)

Motivations:

- · Keep your disquise
- · Win your bet with The Witch
- · Make people look foolish
- Seduce The Runaway

Special Story Rules:

In any tale told by you or the mortals, what happens to representations of your archetype changes your history and personality. This is especially true of any details added by the mortals. In the Baker's story, the underdog is a trickster figure.

However, you also get to make stories real, and at the end of the night can bring a supernatural power to bear upon the Mortals for good or ill.

The story you know:

A clever trickster torments and confuses person(s) to the amusement of all--or at least you. (Ex: Midsummer Night's Dream, will o'wisps)

Changes:

Once during someone else's story you can choose to change the direction by introducing a plot complication which the teller must integrate:

Can change: Add unexpected plot twists

What you want out of stories: You start wanting trickery and cleverness, this will change if your personality changes to whatever best embodies your spirit.

The Stern Woodsman / The Witch:

Story:

Centuries ago you left behind mortal life to become the witch of the Dark Woods. Your nature changes as you drift into myth, but always takes the form of a ruthlessness and powerful old witch. You share your home with many mythic creatures, including a too clever trickster, with whom you have a complicated relationship. Your feud is older than most mortal's lives, but has aged like brandy into a type of companionable sniping friendship.

Life for you is solitary, living alone in your cottage. Mortals don't come through the Dark Woods much anymore, and you get bored. So when you saw two mortals traveling in their sad donkey cart along the path, you and the trickster decided to entertain yourselves. You placed a bet about what each of you could get them to do. Then, disguised as brigands you attacked and stranded them in the forest.

Changing into a pair of woodcutters, you set your warm fire's glow like a lure, to tempt them in for an evening of "entertainment." Unbeknownst to the Trickster, you have an ulterior motive, one of these mortals (or both) is important to you.

Questions to answer with the Trickster / Jolly Woodsman:

- What is your name?
- What is your bet with the trickster?
- What is your feud with the trickster?

Questions to answer privately:

What do you need from the Mortals?

Motivations:

- Keep your disguise
- · Win your bet with The Trickster
- · Get what you need
- · Be mysterious and powerful

Special Story Rules:

In any tale told by you or the mortals, what happens to representations of your archetype changes your history and personality. This is especially true of any details added by the Mortals. In the Runaway's story, a witch features prominently.

However, you also get to make stories real, and at the end of the night can bring a supernatural power to bear upon the Mortals for good or ill.

The story you know: A strong beautiful witch torments a useless prince/princess. (ex: Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, etc. but with a new perspective.)

Changes:

Once during someone else's story you can choose to change the direction by introducing a plot complication which the teller must integrate:

Can change: Character's powers and abilities

What you want out of stories: You start wanting tales of vengeance, this will change if your personality changes to whatever best embodies your spirit.

WRITTEN BY THE VICTORS

BY EPISTOLARY RICHARD

Erin and Umia have been at war for a century. The final ten years of the war were a lengthy and painful road to peace between the two peoples. In this game we will write the history of the road to peace.

We will write this history five times, each time at an increasingly distant periods from the events themselves, and each time the history will be different.

WRITTEN BY THE VICTORS

a game of historiography

Arranging the game

Written by the Victors requires two or more players, copies of the game documents and a place where the players can both view the documents and write upon them. With a small number of players this could be a clipboard or a table (though players will need to be able to walk away to talk to each other privately). For a larger number of players you may wish to use a flip chart or similar.

Starting the game

The host reads the following opening statement:

"The century-long conflict between the peoples of Erin and Umia is over, ended with an agreement known as the Great Reconciliation. During the conflict, both sides had written and rewritten their respective histories so as to incite greater hatred against their enemies. To prevent this in the future, the Great Reconciliation included one provision requiring that there only ever be a single official history of the conflict, agreed by both Erin and Umia.

"And so delegates from Erin and Umia periodically convened to write and revise the official history of the long war between them. And even though the facts never changed, the history was never the same twice.

"We will play the delegates from Erin and Umia when they meet 10 years, 50 years, 100 years, 150 years and 300 years after the end of the war. We will play them only on the last day of each conference when they are writing the official history's penultimate chapter: The Path to Peace.

"By the end of the game, we will have written five different versions of the same time period and each will be different."

Show the players the Fact Sheet. Explain that everything written on the Fact Sheet is true and cannot be contradicted outright, but it can be presented in the histories in different ways and from different perspectives.

Before the First Conference

Generate Starting Events

Each player picks an entry from 'Starting Events' (either randomly or their choice) and uses what is written there to inspire them to create an event that occurred during the final years of the conflict. They write the event on the Fact Sheet. Note that these are not written in chronological order.

Players continue to create events until every player has created at least one event and there are at least 10 events.

Divide the players

Divide the players equally between the Erin and Umia delegations. Each delegation should choose a Delegation Lead for the first phase. The role of Delegation Lead rotates around the players after each Conference.

Explain the format of the Conferences

The host reads the following:

"The first conference set the format for all the ones that followed. On the first day, the two delegations would meet and socialise informally. On the second day, each delegation would present their latest historical research into the conflict. Then they would start on their main task, revising the official history of the conflict, chapter by chapter.

"We will have five conferences total, each further and further into the future. Each will begin with the Delegation Leads choosing a Conference Sheet which gives some detail as to current events happening at the same time as the Conference. The Leads will then follow the instruction on the card.

"One delegation (as dictated by the Conference Sheet) will then present their latest research. That delegation will then announce the title of their three presentations and makes three changes to the Fact Sheet (one for each presentation). Each change can either add or remove an event or add a detail to an existing event.

"Finally, we will create a summary of the new penultimate chapter of the official history. That summary will consist of five statements about the final years of the conflict and the Path to Peace. Each statement must be based upon one of the events of the Fact Sheet, but how that event is presented in the official history is down to the delegations.

"Unless a Conference Sheet states otherwise, it is down to the delegations and Leads to resolve any disagreements between them."

The Conferences

Draw a Conference Sheet

One of the Leads randomly selects one of the Conference Sheets for that Conference and then carries out the instructions written there.

Present Research

The Conference Sheet will state which delegation presents their research. Those delegates then agree amongst themselves three changes they wish to make to the Fact Sheet (either adding or removing an event or adding a detail to an event). Those delegates then present their research by announcing the title of each presentation and by making the change to the Fact Sheet.

Write the History

The delegates then decide upon the five statements that summarise the new official history of the penultimate chapter. Which events are chosen, how they're presented and their order of presentation is entirely down to the delegates to decide. Unless stated on a Conference Sheet, it is intentionally left to the delegates to work out how they'll reach agreement on the five statements; the organisational demands of games with two players will be very different to games with ten.

The delegates write their summary on an Official History sheet. This concludes the Conference.

You may wish to have a break in between Conferences. New players can be added, or players can leave, in between conferences, but do not have players swap from one delegation to another.

Ending the Game

After the fifth conference, the host symbolically destroys the Fact Sheet. The facts no longer exist, only the official histories. The players then read aloud the Official History sheets in chronological order. They conclude by reading the Secret History from the Fourth Conference and the epitaph from the Fifth Conference. Bundle these all together as a record of your game.

If the host wishes, they may end the game by reading this closing statement by E.H. Carr:

"The historian is part of the present and the facts belong to the past. The historian and the facts of history are necessary to one another. The historian without his facts is rootless and futile; the facts without their historian are dead and meaningless. My first answer therefore to the question 'What is history?' is that it is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past."

Event:			Event:		
Detail: Detail: Detail:	Event:		Detail: Detail:		
Event:	Detail: Detail: Detail:		Event:	Detail: Detail:	
Detail: Detail: Detail:		Event:	Detail: Detail: Detail:		
Event:		Detail: Detail: Detail:		Event:	
Detail: Detail: Detail:				Detail: Detail:	
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	Event:			Detail:	FACT
	Detail: Detail: Detail:				

STARTING

Players may pick from this list, choose randomly or create their own.

1. A repatriation of captives	16. An assassination
2. A massacre	17. A celebration
3. A significant birth	18. Outrage
4. A diplomatic misunderstanding	19. A reluctant withdrawal
5. A change in leadership	20. A failure to recruit
6. A failed offensive	21. A crack in a cult of personality
7. Protests at home	22. Infiltration and recruitment
8. An appeal from an unlikely source	23. A strike
9. A desperate shortage	24. A recognition of rights
10. A trial	25. An unprecedented journey
11. Intervention by outsiders	26. A high-level meeting
12. A terrible loss	27. A controversial agreement
13. A temporary truce	28. A public scandal
14. First use of a new weapon	29. Political crisis

30. A disobedient press

15. An economic collapse

FIRST CONFERENCE 10 YEARS AFTER THE END

Read the following:

A Fragile Peace. It is ten years after the war ending and, perhaps against the odds, the fragile peace has held. Both sides make great shows of friendship and do not dare dredge up bad memories, nor take too much credit bringing the war to an end.

My delegation will answer the following questions about the current state of events:

- What monument has been built to the Great Reconciliation and who paid for it?
- People can move freely again, who of the Umian people now live amongst the Erin and why?
- What Erin tradition that arose during the long war is now forbidden?

The other delegation will present historical research and make three changes to the Fact-Sheet.

We will then together write the history of the last few years of the war.

FIRST CONFERENCE 10 YEARS AFTER THE END

Hand this to the other Delegate Lead. They then read the following:

A Fragile Peace. It is ten years after the war ending and, perhaps against the odds, the fragile peace has held. Both sides make great shows of friendship and do not dare dredge up bad memories, nor take too much credit bringing the war to an end.

My delegation will answer the following questions about the current state of events:

- What luxury item has just returned to Umia?
- Both sides have massively reduced their military strength. How have the Erin fighters been treated differently than the Umian?
- A disease struck one side more severely than the other. Which side and who do they blame?

The other delegation will present historical research and make three changes to the Fact-Sheet.

We will then together write the history of the last few years of the war.

SECOND CONFERENCE 50 YEARS AFTER THE END

Read the following:

The Last Living Memories. It is fifty years after the war and the peace is well-established. There is renewed interest in recording the truth of terrible acts during the war. Only a small number of survivors of the time are still alive and there is a drive to record their experiences before they die.

My delegation will answer the following questions about the current state of events:

- One side's post-war economic boom is coming to an end; who stands to lose the most?
- One side has officially apologised for an event during the war. Which side and what for?
- One thing has deliberately not been rebuilt. What is it and why not?

The other delegation will then present the historical research and make three changes to the Fact-Sheet. Each research must be presented as a biography of a significant person during the time.

We will then together write the history of the last few years of the war.

SECOND CONFERENCE 50 YEARS AFTER THE END

Hand this to the other Delegate Lead. They then read the following:

The New Dynasties. It is fifty years after the war and the peace is well-established. Generations have grown up knowing only peace and the benevolent rule of the interconnected dynasties of the leaders of Erin and Umia. Historical works of the war focus on the heroic roles played by these families.

My delegation will answer the following questions about the current state of events:

- Which side is calling for stronger ties with the other and what will they gain?
- A person of mixed Erin-Umia parentage is now in a very influential position, who is it?
- One side's ownership of something is disputed. What is it and what claim do they have?

The other delegation will then present the historical research and make three changes to the Fact-Sheet. Each piece of research must be connected to one of the ruling families in some way.

We will then together write the history of the last few years of the war.

THIRD CONFERENCE 100 YEARS AFTER THE END

Read the following:

Dreams of Empire. It is one hundred years after the war and Erin and Umia have grown in power and now dominate weaker neighbours. The long war between them is now seen as prologue to this new age and current histories look for the seeds of future greatness in those dark times.

My delegation will answer the following questions about the current state of events:

- Who is the longest-serving leader and how have they brought Erin and Umia closer?
- What is the philosophical rationale used to justify Erin and Umia's dominance over others?
- The two sides are competing to control another people. Who are they and what do they have?

The other delegation will then present the historical research and make three changes to the Fact-Sheet. Each research must be presented as related to a current quality either side possesses.

We will then together write the history of the last few years of the war.

THIRD CONFERENCE 100 YEARS AFTER THE END

Read the following:

The forces of social change. It is one hundred years after the war and people feel greater loyalty to those of their class on the other side, than to those on their own side of a different class. History is no longer told as the story of individuals, but rather of great forces that shape society.

My delegation will answer the following questions about the current state of events:

- What recent measure imposed by the leaders of Erin and Umia is deeply unpopular?
- What industry is on the verge of collapse and why?
- We both have engaged in costly competition with others. Who are they and why did we lose?

The other delegation will then present the historical research and make three changes to the Fact-Sheet. Each piece of research must be connected to one of the ruling families in some way.

We will then together write the history of the last few years of the war.

FOURTH CONFERENCE 150 YEARS AFTER THE END

Ask the other Delegate Leader to pick up and follow the instructions on the other sheet then read:

A Golden Age. It is one hundred and fifty years after the war and we have unified as a single great nation. Our people are prosperous and healthy and it is a time of scientific advancement and cultural exploration. Current histories are written with Erin and Umia as a single people destined to unify.

My delegation will answer the following questions about the current state of events:

- What disaster struck the other side prior to the unification?
- What public show of gratitude do they make to us every year?

No further research will be presented as our knowledge of history is complete.

We will then together write the history of the last few years of the war.

For the Fifth Conference, we will take the card 'A Noble History'.

FOURTH CONFERENCE 150 YEARS AFTER THE END

Ask the other Delegate Leader to pick up and follow the instructions on the other sheet:

A Secret History. It is one hundred and fifty years after the war, but in a way the war never ended. Our people have been subjugated by the others. We're told they saved us, but we can see that they are trying to erase our sense of identity. We will have no say in deciding the official history, but we will create a secret history and speak it amongst ourselves until the last of us is gone.

We will agree on three changes to the Fact-Sheet as before, but we will not write them on it.

We will not argue with the others as to the official history. We will write our own history of the war and keep it secret. They could not conquer us through force, so they conspired to claim a peace and beat us through subterfuge. Our secret history will tell the truth of how that began in the last years of the war.

We will not take a card for the Fifth Conference.

FIFTH CONFERENCE 300 YEARS AFTER THE END

Read the following:

A Noble History. It is three hundred years after the war and our golden age has faded. We still have influence, however, in advising and guiding the younger nations. Current histories are more reflective and romanticise the other side, whose unique culture has now been sadly lost.

Only our delegation attends the Fifth Conference. The other players answer the following:

- What was the last living aspect of their culture to be lost?
- Why was there 150 years between the Fourth and Fifth Conferences?
- Which younger nation is now dominant? How do they exert their power?

No further research will be presented as our knowledge of history is complete.

We will write the history of the last few years of the war alone. As we do so, the other players will write an epitaph for their lost people at the bottom of the Secret History from the Fourth Conference.

FIRST CONFERENCE 10 YEARS AFTER THE END

OFFICIAL HISTORY

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

SECOND CONFERENCE 50 YEARS AFTER THE END

OFFICIAL HISTORY

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

THIRD CONFERENCE 100 YEARS AFTER THE END

OFFICIAL HISTORY

1.

2.

3.

4.

FOURTH CONFERENCE 150 YEARS AFTER THE END

OFFICIAL HISTORY

1.

2.

3.

4.

FOURTH CONFERENCE 150 YEARS AFTER THE END

SECRET HISTORY

1.

2.

3.

4.

FIFTH CONFERENCE 300 YEARS AFTER THE END

OFFICIAL HISTORY

1.

2.

3.

4.

YOU DO (NOT) BELONG HERE

BY MICHAEL MEINBERG

You Do (Not) Belong here is a game of bureaucratic politics, where the people involved do not always have the confidence to push forward their agenda. But they must somehow find solutions to the problems they face, or else the Arts Center might be closed for good!

You Do (Not) Belong Here

A Game of Confidence and the Lack Thereof

by Michael Meinberg

Introduction

You Do (Not) Belong Here is a game of bureaucratic politics and socializing for four players. It requires a table, a printed copy of these rules, and a pile of six sided dice. If your group has insufficient dice, tokens can be used in their place.

Premise

You are a member of the advisory board for the New Bluewood Arts Center. Most of you are brand new, having been brought in by Terry Young to be new blood to the decision making process. This is your first meeting of the new board, and you have a great number of issues before you, and a limited amount of time to solve them. But there is the creeping doubt in the back of your head, do you really belong here? Do you have the skills and knowledge necessary to solve these issues?

Themes

Consent

If your group has preexisting procedures for handling consent and unwanted topics at the table, then please use those, as they will fit the flow of your interactions best.

If your group does not have such procedures, or if this is a group meeting for the first time, then it is recommended that you use a reactive consent system. The topics that come up in You Do (Not) Belong Here are unlikely to be directly triggering, but if that happens, then any player may call out an "X" and rewind the scene back to before the problematic content entered. No other player is allowed to ask why they chose to do this, and must abide by the decision of the player that called for an X.

If a player feels unable to continue playing for whatever reason, they may excuse themselves at any time, and either return or not, depending on if they feel like they continue playing after some time away.

The Board

Not-for-profit arts oriented organizations require a board to oversee their activities. In most cases, this board consists of a mix of professionals, both from the artistic medium of the organization and those that can offer useful services to the organization. The board often also includes members who are either major donors or who have connections with major donors. The major function of the board is to secure funding for operations, set top level planning, and to hire managers for the organization. The exact duties, limitations, and mission of the board is laid out in the organization's charter, created at the organization's founding.

Boards meet anywhere from weekly to twice a year, and typically range in size from four to seven members at any particular time.

Themes

The Arts Center

A lively Arts Center enriches the community to which it is attached, drawing both business and consumers to the downtown of the community, breathing fresh air into the crumbling infrastructure of decaying communities and ensuring that healthy ones remain vibrant. They can serve a variety of functions: providing exposure to developing artists in the community, bringing in art from outside, and providing a space for social functions. The balance between these three functions, as well as which artistic medium is given primacy, will depend on the charter of the Arts Center, the ideas of the board, and the needs of the community.

Instructions

Setup

Before everyone arrives, do the following:

- *Print out these rules in their entirety, and cut out the seperate pages of the Handouts Section at the end.
- *Post the Content Warning page on an easily visible wall.
- *Place the character sheets in the center of the main playing table.
- *Place the Scenario Sheets underneath Terry Young's sheet.
- *Place the dice and/or tokens in a large pile to the side of the character sheets.

Before beginning play, do the following:

- *Have everyone choose a character to play. Anyone who brought snacks or drinks get priority in selecting characters and anyone who brought coffee gets top priority. If there is still disagreement over who gets which player, the host can decide who gets the desired character.
- *Whoever chooses to play as Terry Young gets the Scenario Sheets and the role of timekeeper for the upcoming scenarios.
- *Once everyone has selected a character, then distribute the dice. Each player gets an amount of die equal to their character's starting Confidence.
- *Take a moment to review the rules in the rest of this section.
- *Being playing!

Playing Scenarios

Play progresses through a series of scenarios, as laid out on the Scenario Sheets. Every game starts with the Introductions scenario and ends with the Closing Time scenario, both of which have special rules. Between these two scenarios, the group will deal with three Problem scenarios, where the four try to come to some consensus about an action to take with regards to the Arts Center.

At the start of each Scenario, Terry Young's player will read aloud the description at the top of the relevant Scenario Sheet, and then open up discussion amongst the table. The nature of this discussion and the rules for it are based on the kind of Scenario. Each scenario has a listed time limit. It is up to

Instructions

Terry Young's player to keep to that time limit, either directly or by appointing another character to be the time keeper. After the end of each scenario, the group should take no more than five minutes before moving on to the next scenario. If the group agrees, they can move to the next Scenario before the end of its time limit.

The rules on Confidence and Mastery apply to all scenarios.

Introductions Scenario

The Introduction scenario is largely freeform, and provides an opportunity for the players to slip fully into character. They may disclose as little or as much as they feel that their character would, in preparation for the discussions to come.

Problem Scanerios

Unlike the Introduction and Closing Time Scenarios, there are more Problem Scenarios than the group will be able to handle in a single session. Prior to each Problem Scenario, Terry Young's player chooses one of the Scenario Sheets to represent the problem placed before the group.

Each Problem Scenario presents an issue regarding the administration of the Arts Center, and presents two different options that can be pursued. After reading out the description of the problem and the two options, the floor is opened up to discussion. Whenever anyone else speaks in support of one of the options, you may choose to place one of your Confidence in support of that option, in the corresponding box on your character sheet. As the scenario progresses, you may place further Confidence in support of either option, as the words of the others sway you. Using Confidence in this way is a gamble, and may result in the loss or gain of Confidence, depending on how the dice fall and what the group decides as their final choice.

At the end of the Scenario, the group must come to an agreement on which option to follow through with. If there is not consensus, then the option favored by the majority is followed through with. In the case of a tie, then Terry Young's

seniority gives them the tie-breaking vote.

After an option has been agreed to, roll every Confidence that has been placed in support of that option to show how well you think that the proposal will do. Every die that comes up as a 1 or 2 is a doubt about the idea that you've supported and is lost and every die that comes up as a 5 or 6 is a hopeful thought about the success of the project and grants 1 additional Confidence, any die that comes up as a 3 or 4 is ambivalent and results in no change to Confidence. Then, compare the amount of Confidence in support of the other option to the number of rolled dice that came up as 5s and 6s. If you have less in support of the failed proposal you are certain that it was a terrible idea to begin with and lose all of that Confidence, otherwise you think it might have been the better idea and keep it all.

Ex: At the end of a Scenario, you have two Confidence in support of Option A and one Confidence in support of Option B, and the group has decided to go with Option A. You roll your two dice in Option A and come up with a 1 and a 5, so you lose one Confidence from the 1 and gain one from the 5, resulting in a net of 0. Next, you compare your amount of dice in Option B to the amount of 5s and 6s in Option A. Since the 5s and 6s are not greater, you get to keep your Confidence from Option B.

Closing Time Scenario

The Closing Time Scenario is the capstone to the game. After working together throughout the meeting, the characters now get to see what sort of relationships they can establish after it's all done. The Closing Time Scenario is similar in style to the Introduction Scenario, but has one additional mechanic.

In order to attempt to establish a connection with another character beyond being on the Board, you have to spend Confidence. This Confidence is lost no matter whether or not that person accepts the attempt.

Instructions

The cost for this attempt varies, as listed below: Exchange of contact information - 2 Confidence Professional meeting - 4 Confidence Personal meeting - 6 Confidence

After the Closing Time, then all that can be said has been said, and it is time to go home.

Confidence

Confidence is your most important resource. It fuels your ability to interact with those around you, and gives strength to your arguments. It will be gained and lost throughout the course of the game. Each point of Confidence is represented by a six sided dice, and the amount that you begin the game with is listed on your character sheet.

During Problem scenarios, you will gamble your Confidence as described in that section as you attempt to find solutions to the problems that the Art Center faces.

If you feel like no one is listening to you, you may Burn a Confidence, by stating your intention to do so and discarding one of your dice into the center pool.

After doing so, everyone at the table has to listen to your next sentence.

If you run out of Confidence, then you cannot speak unless you are addressed directly.

You can recover Confidence three times per game, by taking a short, five to ten minute break, stepping away from the others in the group and taking the time to regain your composure. Each time you do so, you gain two Confidence.

You can also gain or lose Confidence by Questioning or Answering your Mastery, as described in the section below.

Mastery

There are certain things you know, certain subject areas where your knowledge is superior to everyone at the table. That knowledge may not be particularly useful, but you know the truth about those areas. Your character sheet describes the areas where your character has Mastery. Any statements that your character makes in regards to the Mastery topic are true and correct in the world of the game. Any other character that attempts to contradict your statements must Ouestion your Mastery.

The character who Questions puts forth a single Confidence towards the the character that they are Questioning. The target can choose to either to let things slide, in which case the character Questioning can contradict the statements of the character with Mastery, or Answer the Question. When Answering, the character puts forth one Confidence as well. Both characters then roll, and whoever rolls the highest takes the Confidence from the other character. Regardless of the outcome of the roll, if a character Answers then their statement is not contradicted and the truth of their Mastery remains known.

Terry Young

Backstory: You were the youngest member of the old Board, and was well aware of your lack of seniority. The other members of the Board seemed like such large personalities, such vibrant people that you couldn't even hope to compare to them, and they ran the Arts Center with such skill that it began to truly flourish and become a prominent element of the community. But then the dictates of the charter came to light, and they all stepped down, leaving only a single old member to carry on the traditions and legacy to a newly formed Board. Everyday, you wish that someone else had taken on that responsibility. You just can't do it. You've picked the people who you think are the best and the brightest in the community, to help continue that legacy, because you know you can't do it alone.

Mastery: You know the history and the rules of the Arts Center better than anyone. You are always correct when you make statements about the Boards, its history, its charter, and it mission. You also are always correct when making statements about yourself.

 $\it Malus$: You selected the other members of the Board and are quite aware of their particular strengths, you cannot Question their Mastery.

Starting Confidence: 4

Option A Option B

Sam Jones

Backstory: You used to be the talk of the town, the big celebrity who went off and made something of yourself. You opened a gallery in the city, you rubbed elbows with the famous and the skilled and the wealthy and you projected grace and power to all that came to know you. But things starting turning. Your rivals started to gain primacy, your gallery stopped being the place to go, stopped being the hip and the trendy and the new, and became a part of the establishment, and thus in conflict with others that were far more deeply entrenched into the culture of the city. Within five years, things fell apart completely and you were forced to return to your hometown, where everyone still marveled at you, though you had no idea why they would think you were anything special. You weren't special, you were just another washed-up hasbeen, forced to return in shame to small town living. Still, when the opportunity to involve yourself in the arts once again arose, you couldn't help yourself.

Mastery: You finger is still on the pulse of the art world, and you are always correct when you make statements about the current fashions and trends amongst artists and those interested in high culture. You also are always correct when making statements about yourself.

Malus: You know the pettiness and the drama of the big city artists. You can never support an action to bring in outside artists if you have the option to help develop hometown artists.

Starting Confidence: 3

Option A	Option B	

Alex Cruz

Backstory: You own a small actuarial firm in town, though you're the junior most of the three members of the organization. One of the more senior members was a previous member of the Board and recommended that you join in as her replacement. You have always been eager to please others, to find the diplomatic solution to problems, so you jumped at the opportunity to prove yourself. Plus, it'd be nice to get out of the house a bit more. But you soon realized that you were entirely out of your depths. You were never a huge arts fan, and never spent more time than you had to in pursuit of them. To make things worse, it had been a while since you dealt with the particular financial difficulties of a not-for-profit organization. But that latter task proved more surmountable and you've spent days poring over texts and records in order to understand the budget and finances of the Arts Center in preparation for this meeting.

Mastery: There's very little about finances that you don't understand, you are always correct when you make statements regarding the budget of the Arts Center. You also are always correct when making statements about yourself. *Malus:* You don't know the first thing about art, and can't make any arguments based on the artistic value of an option.

Starting Confidence: 3

Option A Option B

Kelly McEntire

Backstory: You work for city hall, part of the mayoral staff, and have managed to survive the recent change in administrations by being a hard worker and not making any noise about the changes brought in by the new mayor. You like helping people, but you've learned over the years that the best way to do that is to stay quiet and do your job. People who make waves or strive for radical change are always dragged down by the power of consensus. You know your place as a cog in a larger machinery that helps the town to function and keep moving. So you were suprised when the mayor personally volunteered you to the position on the Board for the Arts Center. You don't want to expect, you don't know what to do, you really don't know much in the way of anything. All you can do is go and hope that you don't make things worse by being there, that your lack of knowledge and experience don't ruin everything.

Mastery: You know what the administration of the city wants to accomplish, and the larger scope of its political aspirations. You are always correct when you make statements about the needs and desires of the city's political bodies. You also are always correct when making statements about yourself.

Malus: You don't like drawing attention to yourself, and you don't like rocking the boat. If two people agree to implement an option, you have to agree with them.

0-1:-- D

Starting Confidence: 2

O-1:-- A

uption A	ohtion R

Content Warning

This game deals with topics related to social anxiety, impostor syndrome, and other related conditions. It is designed to be medium to high bleed, low to medium intensity, and low impact. If you have any of these conditions, this material may be uncomfortable. If, at any time, you feel you cannot continue playing, do not be afraid to excuse yourself.

Introductions

Description: The new Board is called to meeting, for the very first time. None of you truly know each other, none of you have ever met face to face before, and here in this meeting room, you have to find solutions to a host of problems. Before setting into that, though, perhaps it would be wise to get to know each other a bit more?

Time Limit: 15 minutes

New Hire

Description: With a new Board taking over, perhaps now is time to review the current arts managers for the center. Have they been working sufficiently? Should they be kept on, at least until the next meeting? Or is it time for some new blood to enter the pool and give the arts center a chance to grow in new and different directions?

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

A) Keep the current manager

B) Hire a new manager

Space

Description: A small business next to the arts center has recently filed bankruptcy. The previous moved swiftly and purchased the deed to the building and the land. Now there is the question of what to do with the space. On the one hand, parking has always been an issue along main street, and the building could easily be torn down to produce a parking lot. On the other hand, the building could be incorporated into the existing structure of the arts center, providing more space for activities and galleries.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

A) Build a parking lot

B) Expand the building

Funding

Description: Funding is always tight for arts organizations, and the center is no different. With resources as tight as they are, you have limited options when it comes to reaching out for new funding. Certainly, you will continue to seek out donations and pro bono work where you can, but more funds are needed than the current drives are proceeding. To that end, a major event is needed. You could talk to the artists who have supported the center in the past and gather pieces of art that you can auction off. Alternatively, you can invite major donors and others local movers and shakers to a gala event and hope that it encourages a higher degree of donations.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

A) Auction B) Gala

Educational

Description: The Arts Center has typically focused on adults, both adult audiences and adult artists. However, you could expand the developing artists initiative to include younger children. This would mean hiring specialized personnel for younger ages, as well as pursuing options to limit the liability of their presence and activities. However, it could expand awareness of the center to entirely new, and previously untapped, audiences, and help provide educational opportunities for the community.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

A) Expand to include children

B) Maintain current operations

Gallery

Description: The Arts Center's gallery is going to be emptied at the end of the month, when the current contract runs out. You have to decide what you'd like to replace the current exhibit. Broadly speaking, you could seek out an existing and established artist (or artists) and have them bring their works in to display, or, alternatively, use it as a space to highlight the work of the developing artist's initiative, giving them a public showing of their finest work and opportunity for the entire community to see what has been created within it.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

A) Outside artists

B) Local artists

Performance Hall

Description: The Performance Hall has an empty slot coming up next month, and you've received two offers from groups that both want to use it during that time. One is a touring folk band and the other is a local theater troupe. While the local troupe is of decent quality for a community theater, the band has been critically acclaimed nationwide for their music.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

A) Theater Troupe

B) Band

Diversity

Description: You have recently received a complaint that the Arts Center seems to focus its attention almost entirely on the works of white men, and upon reviewing the history of the Center, this seems to be true. You could continue on your course, and use your own best judgment, and the best judgment of the arts manager, to select what works you think are the best fit. Or, you could make a concerted effort to reach out to marginalized and underrepresented groups and make sure that their work receives the attention that it is due.

Time Limit: 20 minutes

Sides:

A) Keep with current policy

B) Reach out to underrepresented groups

Closing Time

Description: The day's work is done and time is running low. It's time to go home and think on what has been done. But before you leave, perhaps there's someone, or multiple someones, that are worth reaching out to, that you might be able to form something more than a purely professional relationship with. Now is the time to put the work behind you, and think about what comes next.

Time Limit: 15 minutes

GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY 2015 SUBMISSION

ZEITGEIST BY NATHAN HARRISON

Zeitgeist is a freeform game of limited communication, invented meaning, and the revelation of secrets, played out in the form of a seance. One player becomes the spirit-medium, speaking for the dead in reply to other players' questions, but constrained to converse using only a procedurally-generated corpus of responses.

Zeitgeist

by Nathan Harrison

A freeform game of limited communication, invented meaning, & the revelation of secrets.

In Zeitgeist, 2 to 4 players will assemble to conduct a séance, with one of those gathered serving as spirit-medium (the others being referred to as "patrons" collectively). Choose the medium in any manner that seems fitting to the participants. The last to have visited a cemetery might have a stronger link to the departed, for example.

During the game, the chosen psychic medium will contact a restless spirit that desires to make something known to one or more of the assembled participants, and become possessed by that spirit. Communication through the veil of death is difficult, and thus the answers the spirit is able to provide through the medium-as-mouthpiece will be severely limited.

To begin play, a quiet place can aid in contacting and listening to the spirits, but is not strictly necessary. Each of the patrons (but not the medium) must provide one item in their possession for use in the séance. Nearly anything will do — a pair of spectacles; a banknote; a key; a fountain pen. Each item should be distinct from the others, and able to be easily picked up and held.

Additionally, either of the following mystical tools will be needed:

ASTRAL FOCUS: A smartphone or similar device capable of accessing the internet and/or Twitter.

GRIMOIRE: A book of text, fiction or nonfiction, running at least 50 pages.

Any of the participants may provide the astral focus or grimoire; they needn't belong to the medium. Depending on the tools available, the selected spirit-medium will open themselves as a channeler using either the astral focus to establish a connection through the aether, or allow the spirits to communicate via the esoteric secrets of the grimoire.

Arrange the participants in a circle, including the medium. Sitting is traditional (and is close to the literal meaning of the French word "séance"), but not required. If available, a round table where all assembled can see one another is ideal. Place the personal items from the patrons in the center of the group.

The assembled must next join hands, close their eyes, bow their heads, and repeat after the medium, who will lead with the following line by line (reading the text if necessary):

Restless spirits, We enjoin thee, Share your secrets, Find us worthy. After this, the patrons will remain with their heads bowed and eyes closed. The spirit-medium will begin to contact the departed, using their selected instrument.

ASTRAL FOCUS: Visit this page using your smartphone or similar device:

http://twitter.com/ZeitgeistOracle

(If using a Twitter app, feel free to search for "ZeitgeistOracle" directly.)

Record the 10 most recent postings from that account in a way that referring to them will be easy. Copying and pasting them into a note app is fine, as is transcribing them to a sheet of paper.

GRIMOIRE: Turn to 10 random pages in the selected book, and transcribe a short sentence or fragment from the bottom line of text on each. The sentence or fragment need not be complete, but should most times not begin or end too abruptly.

With either method, take note of any themes that seem to immediately present themselves. Once all 10 passages have been recorded using either of the above methods, the medium should instruct the patrons to raise their heads, and open their eyes. Make it plain that these are the last words the spirit-medium will speak of their own accord for the remainder of the séance — henceforth, when the patrons speak to the medium, it will be the spirit that answers.

Medium, as your last action under your own power, set a timer for one hour exactly, and set it into motion where all may see. Contact with the spirit realm is taxing, and any connection beyond that span is both dangerous and fragile.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MEDIUM:

Stand up from your chair at this point, if you are seated. You will move about the space for the remainder of the séance. When asked questions, you must reply using one of the 10 excerpts you have recorded. The relevance of your answer may be crystal clear, opaque, half-relevant, repetitive — respond as makes sense to you and as the spirit moves you. Try to respond to questions in the moment, using the response that first leaps out to you. The questions the patrons ask will guide what comes next, and in combination with your answers, all assembled will discover what the spirit wishes to make known.

If you wish to have your response be associated with a specific patron directly, reach into the center of the group and disturb the personal item that they have provided.

Certain phrases, when repeated, may come to take on meanings beyond the literal — embrace this, and use it to come nearer to making the spirit's secret known.

Should the patrons become sufficiently lost, confused, or otherwise unable to proceed in a productive way in their communication with the spirit, do this: return to your spot, resume your place there, and announce to the patrons that the spirit has left your body and thus the séance has ended. If the hour timer goes off, the séance ends then as well.

Otherwise, do the above when the secret the spirit wishes to share becomes apparent for those assembled.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PATRONS:

Address your questions to the medium's empty chair, for their body is still present there, and the spirit will answer from that body's mouth.

You may ask any question of the spirit that you like, though you ought not to presume too much. Elsewise, the spirit may become defiant or vengeful, and depart from the medium before making its secret known to you. Presuming to ask "Who killed you?" straight away is probably too much, if nothing the spirit has shared suggests that so far. "How did you die?" however, presumes nothing at all beyond what the spirit's condition makes plain anyway.

The spirit will answer you to the best of its ability, but its answers may not always be clear. Do know that the spirit is trying to communicate, and is not interested in preserving its secrets, or the secrets of anyone else present that it may know — quite the opposite. The spirit is eager to pass on its secret to the living so that it may experience peace in death at last.

Even in a séance, however, the veil of death stands dark and heavy, and so the restless spirit will often repeat itself, or answer with what may sound like nonsense. Interpret this as you will, but know that the spirit will always speak truth above all to any who ask.

When the séance has ended, the patrons should share with the medium what the spirit made known — due to the psychic demands of acting as vessel for the dead, the medium will have no recollection past the setting of the hour timer into motion. Whether the patrons choose to be truthful with the medium about what the spirit revealed is for them to decide alone.

written by Nathan Harrison for the 2015 Golden Cobra freeform competition
@ZeitgeistOracle Twitter bot created using instructions here:
http://readwrite.com/2014/06/20/random-non-sequitur-twitter-bot-instructions



A NOTE ABOUT THE APPENDIX

Some games are transparent in their practical considerations and play experiences, some are not, and others are somewhat complicated. In this appendix we have tried to create a usable document that will help readers find the best game for their purposes. In an effort to make this a usable reference we have had to accept a certain loss of information for the sake of simplicity. Additionally, the short time frame for compliling this anthology has made it impractical to actually play the submissions. All of which is to say that you may not agree with our assessment of a tone or duration for a given game (many game texts didn't offer an estimate, and most of those that did are guesses), and as you know the chemistry of your play group may take a game in a unique direction. Consider this an at-a-glance assessment and understand that many games are more nuanced than described here. It is our hope that this will make it a little easier to find a game than just digging through the whole collection yourself. Good luck and happy gaming!

READING THE APPENDICES

Tone describes the mood and attitude of play. Many games collected here request a deliberate approach from the players. Since so many games qualified for a Serious tone, this is more about pinpointing the exceptions.

Serious: The game explores a subject with the intention of the players responding emotionally to play.

Introspective: The game explores a subject with the intention of the players thinking critically about their play experiences.

Fun: The game does not require deep emotional buy-in from the players.

Silly: The game is light hearted and perhaps humerous.

Suspense: The game relies upon tension for a proper play experience.

Varies: The game either potentially or deliberately shifts between multiple tones.

Touch indicates a how physical contact is used in the game.

None: The game does not require or encourage touch.

Hands: Only basic hand contact in employed, such as holding or touching hands.

Casual: Socially acceptable touches are employed, such as hand/shoulder/arm contact or hugs.

Intimate: The game requests use of close proximity and affectionate contact.

Limited: The game makes use of touch in specific and constrained ways.

Full Violence: The game employs consensual violence; certainly painful and probably injurious.

Optional: The game permits touch, but leaves it up to the discretion and comfort of the players.

Tags were provided by the game designers.

Player Counts are self explanatory. Some games are more flexible than they might appear, however.

Space requirements often have specific needs. Only general terms are defined here in ranges.

Small: Booth at a restaurant to a bedroom.

Medium: Living room to group office.

Large: Classroom or large conference room.

Extensive: Multiple classrooms to a park or a gym.

Activity summarizes how much and what kind of movement players are required or expected to perform during play.

Live Acting: Players perform the gestures, body movements, and other activities of a character.

Occasional Activity: Players are mostly seated or stationary, but are occasionally asked to perform a tasks of various activity levels.

Minimal Motion: Continuous or long periods of standing or casually moving about.

Significant Motion: Continuous or long periods or periods of walking about or performing some other actions.

Full Motion: Continuous or long periods of total body movement similar to exercise.

[Specific Activity]: The game makes use of a specific and noteworthy action.

Materials & Considerations focus mostly on other physical requirements for play, but other important comments are sometimes included.

2015 GOLDEN COBRA ANTHOLOGY

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APPENDIX A

GAMES BY TITLE WITH CONTENT ADVISORY

TITLE	TONE	CONTACT	TAGS	PAGE
The Affliction	Serious	None - Casual	Serious, Medical, Health	7
Anything Helps	Serious	Casual	Single-Player, Outdoor, Homeless	13
As We Know It	Serious	None	Apocalyptic, Texting, Isolation	31
Before You Leave	Serious	Limited	Memory, Ghost, Communication, Love	37
Better	Serious, Introspective	None	Gestalt, Interpersonal, Conformity	52
Beyond the Wall	Serious, Introspective	Optional	Emotional, Physical Roleplay, Character Building	63
Blessed Be the Host of the King of Heaven!	Serious	Limited	Voice, Stature, Authority, Exclusion	77
Celestial Bodies	Intospective	None	Space, Mythology, Abstract, Non-Touch	91
A Crow Funeral	Fun	Hands	Crows, Debate, Short	100
Dessert	Varies	Hands	Friendship, Advance, Teams	104
Drink Me	Serious	Optional	Dark, Weird, Victorian	111
Dystopia	Serious	Hands	Young Adult, Dystopian LARP, New Gamers	130
Exclusive Listing	Serious	Casual	Heartbroken, Fantasy, Real Estate	156
Faerie Circle	Serious	Casual	Empathy, Marginalization, Queer, Fantasy	165
Fight Truck	N/A	Full violence	Experimental, Dangerous, Gender, Magic	178
For a Long Time I Would Go to Bed Early	Serious, Introspective	Optional	Memory, Sensation, Storytelling, Realistic	183
Fragments	Serious	Optional	Everyday Life, Serious, Relationships	190
Gone But Not Forgotten	Serious	None	Emotional, Improvised, Atmospheric, Relationships	202
Guiding Light	Serious	None	Emotional, Depression, Isolation	214
Halloween Survival Guide	Fun, Silly	Optional	Halloween, Freeform, Emotional Layer	221
Her Inner Dead Ends	Serious	Minimal	Community, Fandom, Meeting, Memories, Online	226
Here Comes a Candle	Serious	Optional	Survival, Dystopia, Love, Duty	240
Here. Me. Now.	Fun then Serious	Optional	Movement, Empathy, Storytelling	267
ICU	Serious	Hands	Empathy, Connection, Mirroring	289
In the Dark	Serious	Optional	Crime, Claustrophobia, Truth, Random Elements	311
It Was a Very Good Year	Serious	Hands	Elderly, Memories	322
Just a Little Peril	Serious	Casual	Relationships, Awkward Conversations, Kink	333
Just Lunch	Fun to Serious	Casual, Optional	Anxiety, Women, Relationships, Conversation	338
The Lofty Beacons	Serious	Optional	Post-Apocalyptic, Mountain, Service, Multiple Groups	349
The Loss	Serious	None, Optional	Mourning, Loss, Parenthood, Life	359

TITLE	TONE	CONTACT	TAGS	PAGE
Lost Genius	Introspective, Serious	None, Optional	Talent, Destiny, Social Drama, Slice Of Life	365
Making Up is Hard To Do	Varies, Introspective	Hands, Intimate	Communication, Emotional, Touch	370
Miséria (Not included)				
The Other Place	Varies, Serious	Hands	Supernatural, Children, Promises, Escape	377
Papier Mâché	Serious	None	Newspapers, Truth, Responsibility, Role-Change	382
Post Modern Kamikaze	Serious	Casual	Physical, Abstract, Experimental, Postmodern	387
Red Headded Stepchild	Serious	None, Optional	Compliment, Backstab, Strip, Excluded	391
Serv1v3.l	Fun	None	Al, Surveillance, Competitive, Imagination	394
Sign	Serious	None, Optional	Language, Silent, Freeform	399
Singing Clay	Serious, Introspective	Hands, Optional	Autism, Golems, Music	424
"Something to Drink With That, Sir?"	Introspective	None, Optional	Social Realism, Meta, Gender, Work	430
Table	Serious	None, Optional	Drama, Modern, Realism	432
This Folks at the Dinner Table	Serious	Minimal, Optional	Bittersweet, Dinner, Departure	442
Together	Varies, Serious	Hands, Pushing	LARP, Freeform, Touching, Romance	453
The Tongues of Our Ancestors	Serious	None, Optional	Indigenous Peoples, Conquest, Language, Episodic, Scene-Based	468
Too Much Slap on the Ecaf	Serious	Casual - Intimate	Queer, London, Sex, Love, London.	485
Ugly Girl	Serious	Casual - Intimate	Beauty, Women, Perceptions, Attraction	490
Universal Doner	Semi-serious, semi-introspective	Casual, Optional	Robots, Playing Cards, Mechanics, Staples	501
Voices	Serious	None, Optional	Psychodrama, Slice-Of-Life, Insanity	514
Waiting for Slenderman	Suspense	None, Optional	Horror, Suspense, Halloween	522
Warmth	Varies, Comforting	None, Optional	Knitting, Abstract, Comfort	540
A Way Out	Varies	None, Optional	Group, Anxiety, Coming Out	546
The Woods	Varies, Suspense	None	Cooperative, Fantasy, Story Telling	555
Written by the Victors	Serious	None	History, Historiography, Politics, Society	563
You Do (Not) Belong Here	Serious, Introspective	None	Meetings, Social Anxiety, Dice	581
Zeitgeist	Varies, Introspective	Hands	Communication, Meaning, Mysticism, Secrets	593



APPENDIX B

GAMES BY PLAYER COUNT WITH PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

TITLE	MIN PLAYERS	MAX PLAYERS	DURATION	SPACE	ACTIVITY	NOTES	PAGE
Table	0	4	1 - 1.5 hours	Small	Minimal Motion	Table and four chairs	432
Universal Doner	0	5	~60 minutes	Medium	Live Acting, Use of Play Materials	Printed materials, assorted game supplies, deck of cards to be destroyed	501
Anything Helps	1	1	Several Hours	Outdoor, public	Minimal Motion, Discomfort	Play takes place in public and incorporates environmental events	13
Faerie Circle	1	4	1 - 2 hours	Table in a public space	Minimal Motion	Printed materials, alternate reality play	165
Just a Little Peril	1	4	100 minutes	Medium	Full Acting	Recommended for adult players only	333
Lost Genius	1	5	30 - 120 minutes	Any	Minimal Motion	For a small group (1-2 players) a coin is required.	365
Beyond the Wall	1	6	2 hours	Medium or larger, little furniture	Significant Motion, Physical Expression	Printed materials, requires control of lighting and sound (ideally)	63
Halloween Survival Guide	1	Many	Several Hours	A house decorated for halloween	Minimal Motion	Played on Halloween with real Trick-or-Treaters	221
Before You Leave	2	2	2 hours	Two rooms or an apartment	Significant Motion, Live Acting	Houshold items and post it notes	37
Her Inner Dead Ends	2	2	2 hours	Any Size	Minimal Motion	Can be played publicly, requires cards	226
Making Up is Hard To Do	2	2	60 - 90 mins	Any	Minimal Motion	Pen, paper, time keeping device	370
Together	2	3	1 - 2 hours	Open space, Medium size	Significant Motion	Players must be comfortable balancing and pushing on one another	453
Celestial Bodies	2	4	30 - 60 minutes	Large, clear of furniture	Significant Motion	Music and sound system, lighting control	91
Gone But Not Forgotten	2	4	2 hours	Medium	Minimal Motion	Printed materials, candles, masks, darkness	202
The Lofty Beacons	2	4	1.5 - 3 hours	Large to Extensive	Minimal Motion, Occasional Activity	May be played with multiple play groups	349
Warmth	2	4	2 hours	Seated, Cozy	Minimal Motion, Knitting/ Crocheting	Yarn, comfy seats, and knitting needles or crochet hooks for each player.	540
Zeitgeist	2	4	1.5 hours	Small	Occasional Activity	Smartphone, Twitter, personal objects, and fiction or non-fiction book.	593
Serv1v3.l	2	8	2 hours	Public Thoroughfare	Minimal Motion	Printed materials, incorporates environment	394

TITLE	MIN PLAYERS	MAX PLAYERS	DURATION	SPACE	ACTIVITY	NOTES	PAGE
A Crow Funeral	2	Many	10 - 30 minutes	Small or larger, public	Minimal Motion	Small trinkets or found objects	100
Fight Truck	2	Many	Variable	Rented Uhaul	Full motion	Accessible first aid mandatory; an experimental game concept about consentual violence (with non-violent variants)	178
Here. Me. Now.	2	Many	60 min	Medium - Large	Full Motion	Printed materials, large surface for writing upon	267
Written by the Victors	2	Many	2 hours	Dependent on size of play group	Occasional Activity	Handouts	563
Just Lunch	3	3	60 minutes	Anyplace with a table and chairs.	Minimal Motion	Large face clock, table and chairs, writing supplies, printed materials	338
The Loss	3	3	90 - 120 minutes	Small to Medium	Live Acting	Play group must include a man and a woman, play materials includes "child's coffin" and doll	359
Too Much Slap on the Ecaf	3	3	1 - 1.5 hours	Public and private spaces	Live Acting	Access to public and private spaces	485
Singing Clay	3	4	20-40 minutes	Medium	Minimal Motion, Singing/Humming	Sound system, familiar song of players' choice	424
This Folks at the Dinner Table	3	4	2 hours	Medium	Minimal Motion	A cooked meal, dining room	442
A Way Out	3	5	2 hours	Medium	Significant Motion, Manual Dexterity	Ten coins of various sizes per player	546
Dessert	3	6	2 hours	Any	Minimal Motion, Live Acting	Players hold out arms for extended periods of time	104
Blessed Be the Host of the King of Heaven!	3	7	2 - 3 hours	Medium or larger, mixed furniture	Significant Motion, Live Acting	Dedicated light source, party streamers, sharpies	77
Red Headded Stepchild	3	12	5 - 10 minutes	Various to player count	Minimal Motion	Optional clothing removal	391
The Affliction	4	4	1 hour	Small - Medium, sitting room	Minimal Motion, Sitting	Internet access/devices for each player	7
As We Know It	4	4	60 minutes	Four closets are a space with four isolated areas	Minimal Motion	Printed cards, six cell phones (for texting)	31
Better	4	4	90 minutes	Medium, chair for each player	Minimal Motion, Sitting	Printed cards	52
Dystopia	4	4	2 hours	Any	Minimal Motion	Players must closing eyes for long periods of time	130
Exclusive Listing	4	4	1 - 2 hours	Large space conceptually divided into seperate rooms	Live Acting	Time keeping	156
Fragments	4	4	2 hours	Small - Medium	Occasional Motion	Printed materials	190
Here Comes a Candle	4	4	1.5 - 2 hours	Medium	Full Acting	Specific play meterials, including sound track and blind folds	240
In the Dark	4	4	~60 minutes	Large (special needs)	Minimal Motion	Three different spaces with special set up	311
It Was a Very Good Year	4	4	2 - 3 hours	Small - Medium	Minimal - Significant Motion	Printed materials	322
The Other Place	4	4	30 - 90 minutes	Medium	Minimal Motion, Mirroring Actions	Divided playspace	377
Papier Mâché	4	4	1 - 2 hours	Any Size	Minimal Motion	Printed materials, coin, newspapers or magaizines (optional)	382
"Something to Drink With That, Sir?"	4	4	30 minutes	Small - Medium	Minimal Motion	One chair	430
The Tongues of Our Ancestors	4	4	2 hours	Medium or larger	Live Acting	Various play materials, printed materials	468

TITLE	MIN PLAYERS	MAX PLAYERS	DURATION	SPACE	ACTIVITY	NOTES	PAGE
Ugly Girl	4	4	1 - 2 hours	Medium, some furniture	Live Acting	Index cards and writing utensils	490
Voices	4	4	1 - 2 hours	Medium	Minimal Motion, Writing, Drawing	Table with bowls, glasses, and chairs, writing supplies including colored pencils	514
You Do (Not) Belong Here	4	4	3 hours	Small - Medium	Minimal Motion	Handouts, timed scenarios	581
Sign	4	5	2 hours	Medium	Minimal Motion	Players will invent a new sign language, ound dampening ear muffs recommended.	399
For a Long Time I Would Go to Bed Early	4	6	30 - 45 minutes	Medium - Large room	Significant Motion	Lighting control, small food item per player	183
Guiding Light	4	6	1 - 2 hours	Small - Medium	Minimal Motion, Use of Candles	Darkness and open flame	214
Post Modern Kamikaze	4	9	1 hour	Minimum of 100 sq ft	Significant Motion, Sweeping Movmements/ Ballet	Facilitator must prepare own debreif	387
Waiting for Slenderman	4	9	2 hours	Medium or larger	Occasional Activity	Total darkness, emphasis on verbal communication, phones for each player, abundant play materials	522
Drink Me	5	5	2 hours	Private room, any size	Minimal to Significant Motion	Players must be completely new to the game, prepared drinks	111
ICU	5	5	2 hours	Small - Medium	Minimal Motion	Space for 2 pairs to be isolated is needed	289
The Woods	5	5	1.5 - 2 hours	Multiple rooms/areas	Minimal Motion	Can be played indoors or outdoors, preferablly around a fire	555
Miséria (Not included)							