

# VELOCIRAPTOR'S GRAVE

## About:

*Velociraptor's Grave* is a freeform LARP about a long-dead dinosaur. Most ghosts last only a few centuries at most before they are willing to move on, but this particular saurian has hung around for over 70 million years. It's time for this ghost to release the energy that binds its spirit to our world and allow its very essence to spread out into the universe like so much stardust.

It's just going to take one last opportunity to say good-bye to earthly things. That's where you come in. Whether you like it or not.

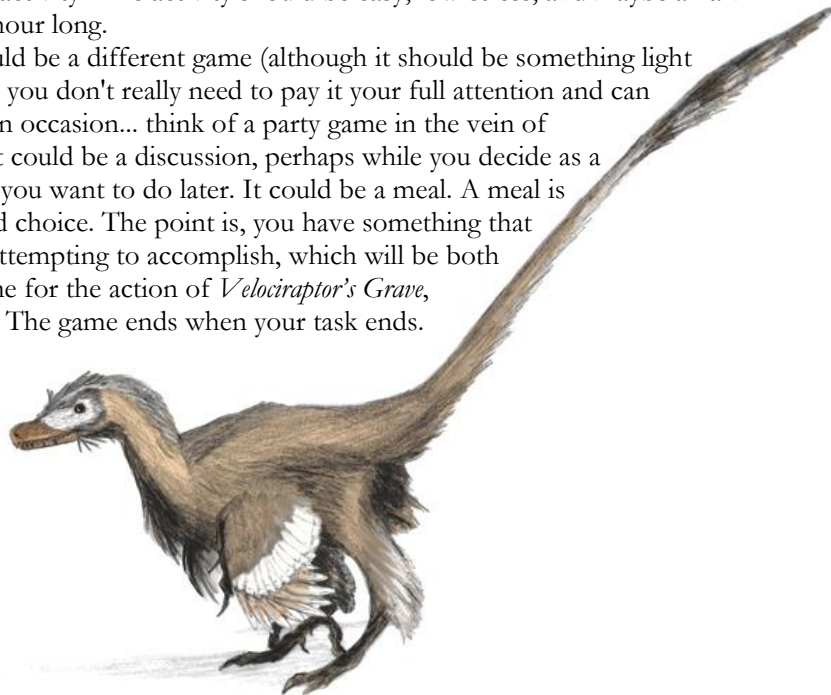
## What You Need:

To play *Velociraptor's Grave* you need players. At least 4, up to about 7. Any higher and it gets hard to keep track of everyone else.

You will all need to be in a place where you feel fairly comfortable, because you'll be acting a bit silly. You may get stared at. People may try to join in. You're going to cause a bit of noise and chaos; this is definitely not a game to play in a library. Be aware, and be respectful of your surroundings.

The final requirement is a **task**. *Velociraptor's Grave* isn't something you play with the group's full focus and energy. Rather, it's a game that takes place behind some other activity. This activity should be easy, low-stress, and maybe a half-hour to an hour long.

That could be a different game (although it should be something light enough that you don't really need to pay it your full attention and can skip turns on occasion... think of a party game in the vein of charades). It could be a discussion, perhaps while you decide as a group what you want to do later. It could be a meal. A meal is a really good choice. The point is, you have something that you are all attempting to accomplish, which will be both the backbone for the action of *Velociraptor's Grave*, and a timer. The game ends when your task ends.



## Starting the Game:

The first step is to find yourself with three or more companions, about to engage in a simple activity. While this can, of course, be something you plan in advance, it's also fun to spring this game on your companions. After all, velociraptors were ambush predators.

When you want the game to begin, grab everyone's attention. Shiver, look uncomfortable, and say:

**"Gosh, does anyone else feel like we just walked over a velociraptor's grave?"**

If the other players are willing to play, they must agree. It doesn't need any further discussion; feeling as if you just walked over a velociraptor's grave is a perfectly normal sensation. Just about everyone feels it every day.

On the other hand, if someone disagrees, and says they don't have that velociraptor's grave feeling? Well then it's not time to play *Velociraptor's Grave* right now. That's okay! There will be other chances. Don't worry about it, and definitely don't press the issue. Oh, and if someone has no idea what you're talking about, take a second to explain how this game works, and then ask again.

Once everyone agrees, the game begins!

## How to Play:

The most important rule is this: do the task you are supposed to be doing. Enjoy the company of your friends. Have a low-key hang-out. Someone's about to be possessed by a velociraptor's ghost, but you don't know that, so... stay cool.

### ***Being Possessed By the Ghost:***

After a minute or two, the player who initially proposed that you play *Velociraptor's Grave* will get possessed by the ghost of a velociraptor.

When you get possessed, make a big, obvious motion as the dinosaur's spirit enters your body and takes it over. You are now possessed by a velociraptor, which means you must act like a velociraptor. Twist your face into a snarl, growl at your companions, try to sniff out some easy prey. If you are comfortable, get up and lope around with huge, ungainly steps. Call out for your pack, even though they've been dead since the Cretaceous. You might try to recruit some passing pigeons into a hunting party, but you won't find much success.

This should probably go without saying but: don't **actually** attack your friends. You can stare them down, spreading your feathered arms to make yourself look bigger and raising one razor-sharp toe claw in a threatening fashion... but velociraptors hunt in packs, and you are currently outnumbered, so you're not actually going to draw blood today. And if someone asks you to get out of their personal space or appears uncomfortable in any way, move along and sniff at someone else. You may be a relentless killing machine, but you're not a jerk.

### ***While Another Player Is Possessed:***

While you're not possessed, you're engaging in whatever your task is. Remain confident in your knowledge that people don't get possessed by velociraptor ghosts. It's just not a thing that happens. Generally, interpret whatever the velociraptor does as if she were a human who's acting a little odd... whenever you bother to pay attention to what she's doing at all. You can still try to include the possessed player in the conversation, and when she responds to your questions by shrieking and showing her talons, just try to fill in what her intention must be. Do your best. Everything is normal! **EVERYTHING IS NORMAL.**

### ***Passing the Ghost:***

After you've been possessed by the velociraptor's ghost for at least a minute, pass the spirit along. Choose any other player, face them and make sure they are paying attention to you. Mime the spirit of the velociraptor passing out of your body in their direction. Now, you are no longer possessed. You have no memories of the events that occurred while you were a velociraptor, and absolutely no inclination to think that something supernatural just happened. Even if you've moved from your seat, even if the conversation has clearly jumped to another topic, even if you are gnawing on a breadstick with the gusto your spectral parasite once used to crack open a tenontosaur's shinbone. You must have zoned out for a minute. Laugh it off and go back to your seat.

If the player possessed by the velociraptor passes its ghost to you, then you become the next vessel for the spirit. Act appropriately velociraptorian. After at least a minute, pass the ghost on again to any player **except** the one who passed the ghost to you. If possible, choose someone who hasn't been possessed yet. Otherwise, go with your heart. Who do you want to see be a dinosaur?

### ***The Extended Game:***

This is the game. Get possessed, act ridiculous, then pass the ghost on to another player. Like that improv game where you pass an invisible ball around a circle, except better, because there's a dinosaur.

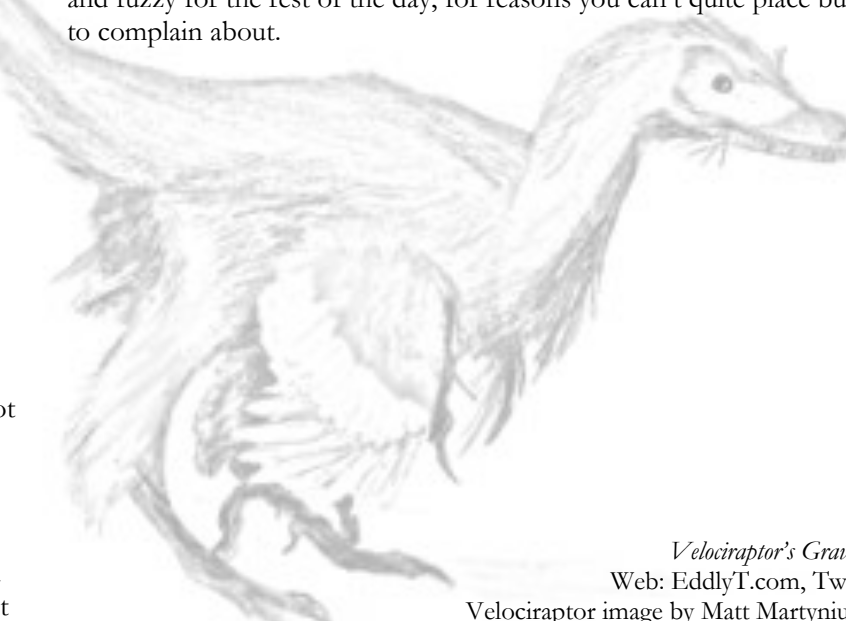
Meanwhile, while you're not possessed, you have engage in whatever task you're supposed to be doing while one of your friends is acting ridiculous. Try not to pay too much attention. Try not to laugh. Try to keep your focus while a velociraptor is two inches away from your face, clearly wondering if you are delicious. Most importantly, remember that **everything is normal**. Like those Animaniacs sketches with Chicken Boo, where everyone is persistently, bizarrely unaware that the person they're dealing with is actually a six-foot tall chicken in a blazer. Except better, because dinosaur. A dinosaur who kind of looks like a giant chicken, let's be honest here.

### **Ending the Game:**

There are two ways to end a game of *Velociraptor's Grave*.

First, is the **tragic ending**: when the velociraptor's player passes on the ghost, but the person who was targeted is unable, unwilling, or unaware, and thus does not get possessed by the spirit. The velociraptor's ghost missed its next vessel, and drifts away from the group. Alas, it has failed to find its peace with the world of the living, and so it does not move on. Instead, it returns to a dormant state which may last for another million years. The game ends, and while you haven't lost, you all feel a sense of vague dissatisfaction; as if someone's well-deserved happy ending did not come to pass. The dissatisfaction will niggle at the back of your head until you finish whatever task you're doing, at which point you'll forget it was ever there.

Secondly, there is the **happy ending**. When the task you have been doing as a group is almost over (or when the group's enthusiasm for being a dinosaur is waning), whomever is possessed by the dinosaur may decide that the ghost is ready to become one with the universe. Instead of passing the ghost to another player, they turn to the sky (or the ceiling) and mime the spirit leaving their body and melding into eternity. The dinosaur has found peace, partially thanks to you, its temporary vessels. While you'll never really understand the role you played in the velociraptor's final moments of post-mortem existence, you will feel warm and fuzzy for the rest of the day, for reasons you can't quite place but aren't going to complain about.



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Game designed for 2016's Golden Cobra competition – <http://www.goldencobra.org>