

THE GLIMPSE

A LARP ABOUT A FAMILY THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

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ABOUT THE LARP

The Glimpse is a two hour long online larp for 6 players and a GM, played over Discord. It is a modern-day family drama with elements of magical realism. It includes topics of suicide, depression and bereavement, but the tone is intended to be hopeful: the family members all ultimately love each other and will help each other cope with their issues.

The players will be divided into two groups of three: copies of the same family in two parallel universes. The life paths of the mirrored characters diverged due to a tragic accident.

The first act of the larp is realistic and the play is limited to the same universe. The second act introduces a surreal element: the computers of the characters undergo an upgrade to a new, quantum version of the operating system, which causes temporary glitches in video calls and gives the characters a brief opportunity to interact with their counterparts from the alternative universe.

THE STORY SO FAR

Leslie and Harper were identical twins. Their parents were emotionally absent, but the twins always had each other: they had a unique bond, finishing each other's sentences and sharing everything. They had different coping strategies when it comes to the parental neglect, though:

Leslie was always the good kid, trying to win their parents' affections by being polite, dutiful and obedient. **Harper, on the other hand, was always the rebellious one:** by getting into enough trouble Harper could at least for a while get their parents' attention.

The twins would always fall in love with the same person, but their crushes were always more interested in Harper. When they were about to graduate high school (Leslie with straight As, Harper with Cs and Ds), **they both fell for a classmate, Cory. Cory and Harper started a serious relationship.**

Cory came from a privileged background and their parents, especially their mother, were very overbearing. Cory wanted to be a writer, but their parents pressured them to study law. They disapproved of Harper. After **Cory and Harper got pregnant with Robin at 18** Cory's parents disowned them and the couple had to fend for themselves (with tremendous help from Leslie). Cory and Leslie attended university part-time while caring for Robin; Harper had some odd jobs but spent too much time partying. **When Robin was 6 Harper and Leslie had a big argument** where Leslie was blaming Harper for not pulling their weight as a parent; **one of them** stormed out of the house and **got hit by a car.**

This is where the universes diverge.

HARPER SURVIVES

In the universe where Leslie died, Harper's self-destructive behaviours gradually spiralled out of control. **Cory and Harper divorced** after a few years and Cory was given full custody of Robin. That was an impulse for Harper to sort themselves out: they went to rehab, started therapy, found a stable job. For a long time now **Harper has been trying to prove to both Robin and Cory that they can be a good and responsible parent.** A couple of years ago they married Alex, a caring and supportive partner, who also became very good friends with Robin. Harper's coping strategy suggested by their therapist is writing letters to Leslie.

Cory's mother forgave them and repaired the relationship between them after they divorced Harper. They are now very close again and Cory always tries to follow her advice. **Cory is a high-flying corporate lawyer, though they are not happy in this job.** They got married again, to a coworker called Morgan; this marriage was very much approved by Cory's mother. They recently started secretly going to therapy due to burn out and discussing separation with Morgan. Cory's therapist suggested they should try to get back to writing as a hobby.

The relationship between **Cory and Harper** gradually improved again and they **began a secret affair shortly before the larp starts.**

Robin is 18 and recently went to university to study engineering. **They are undergoing a major depressive episode** and are feeling suicidal. They are feeling lonely and alienated at university, they got romantically rejected by a classmate they were interested in, Billie, and in general they always felt like an outsider due to their unusual family history. At the start of the larp, they are considering committing suicide. In this universe, **Robin will make a suicide attempt.**

LESLIE SURVIVES

Note: For clarity, the names of the characters in this universe are suffixed with an underscore_.

In the universe where Harper died, **Cory_ and Leslie_ jointly took care of Robin_**, living together as a family. Eventually, **their relationship became romantic and they married**, even though Leslie_ has a constant doubt whether Cory_ only ever loved Harper. **Leslie_ is feeling that they have been the responsible one for too long**, especially after Cory_ quit their job. They also resent not feeling loved by Cory_ and are considering separation and/or moving away to live somewhere else for a while, do something different. They are being courted by a coworker, Alex_. Leslie_'s coping strategy is writing letters to Harper.

Cory_'s mother forgave them and repaired the relationship between them after Harper died. For many years, Cory_ was a high-flying corporate lawyer, though they hated this job. One day their computer randomly restarted during an important presentation they were giving to stakeholders and that precipitated them quitting their job and trying to become a writer. Cory_'s mother disapproved of this decision and the relationship between her and Cory_ became much colder again. She is now seriously ill. **Cory has been trying to write a novel for a couple of years and are now struggling more and more with writer's block.**

Robin_ is 18 and recently went to university to study engineering. **They are undergoing a major depressive episode** and are feeling suicidal. They are feeling lonely and alienated at university, they got romantically rejected by a classmate they were interested in, Billie_, and in general they always felt like an outsider due to their unusual family history. At the start of the larp, they are considering committing suicide. In this universe, **Robin_ will not make a suicide attempt.**

SETUP

Discord setup. Create your own copy of this [server template](#) and invite the players. You should all gather in the **#ooc** voice channel. Note: initially, the players are only able to see the **#ooc** and **ooc** channels, all the other ones are only visible to the GM. Give them a couple of minutes to read the backstory of the larp and choose their characters. After they have decided, ask them to change their nicknames to their character names (including the “_”, if appropriate). If possible, the players of mirrored characters should put on a similar item of clothing (e.g. Robin and Robin_ wear a hat, Harper and Leslie_ wear a scarf etc).

Modify the permissions of the channels in the following way:

- Everyone should have access to the text channel sharing their name (“_” is important, so e.g. Robin should have access to **#robin** but not **#robin_**).
- Harper, Cory and Robin should have access to **Voice Chat**. The other three should have access to **Voice Chat_**.

Note: For an extra dimension of play, the two Robin **characters** can be of a different gender.

WORKSHOP

The players should now join the **Voice Chat** channel visible to them (with or without “_”). This will divide them into 2 groups of 3 characters sharing the same universe. Give them 20 minutes to discuss the following in these groups:

- Briefly go through the family history again to remind yourself how you are all connected and what NPCs there are.
- Describe your character to the others: define basic facts like their job, personality, hobbies.
- What is your relationship like and what do you do together? Discuss this for the whole group and for each pair.
- How has the death of one of the twins affected the family? In what way are they

still present in your life? How do you remember them?

- What was Robin’s upbringing like? How much did Cory’s mother influence it? What motivated Robin’s decision to study engineering?

STRUCTURE

Explain the following to the players. The larp has 2 acts, each act is composed of four 10 minute long scenes. The GM will be sending you instructions and framing the scenes in your named channels; please follow these instructions immediately, even if it means a sharp cut to the current scene. The instructions will always involve either joining or disconnecting from **Voice Chat**. Once per larp, you will also be instructed to start writing something in your named channel, e.g. a letter. A while later, the GM will tell you to post to the channel the thing you are currently writing. It is important that you post it immediately, even if it is not finished yet – just press enter.

In Act 2 (i.e. after the system upgrade begins), the GM will occasionally move the players of mirrored characters between the two **Voice Chat** channels, e.g. swapping Cory and Cory_. The characters might initially not notice that anything unusual has happened and continue the conversation as normal – the mirrored characters look the same, after all. When they do realise what has happened, they will see it as unusual, of course, but they should not panic, alert the newspapers etc. Instead, in the tone of magical realism, they should use this unique opportunity to have a conversation with alternate versions of themselves or their family members.

NOTES TO THE GM

At the start of each scene, send the instructions to all of the named channels according to the schedule below and perform the steps listed in the GM column for that scene. To swap players, you can just drag-and-drop them between the two channels.

	Harper	Cory	Robin	Leslie_	Cory_	Robin_	GM
1	Robin's 18th birthday is coming up soon. You video call Cory to discuss what present to get them and possibly also talk about your relationship. [Join Voice Chat]	Robin's 18th birthday is coming up soon. Harper video calls you to discuss what present to get them. Maybe you should also talk about your relationship... [Join Voice Chat]	You're feeling so hopeless and alone. You were supposed to write an email to your parents updating them on how you're settling in at uni, but it is turning into a suicide note. [Write in #robin]	Robin_'s 18th birthday is coming up soon. You video call Cory_ to discuss what present to get them and possibly also talk about your relationship. [Join Voice Chat_]	Robin_'s 18th birthday is coming up soon. Leslie_ video calls you to discuss what present to get them. Maybe you should also talk about your relationship... [Join Voice Chat_]	You're feeling so hopeless and alone. You were supposed to write an email to Cory_ and Leslie_ updating them on how you're settling in at uni -- will it be honest or reassuring? [Write in #robin_]	Remind both Robins to post what they've written at least 2 minutes before the scene ends. Post each of these letters to the channels of the other 2 characters in the same universe.
2	Robin is in hospital after their suicide attempt. The hospital staff does not allow anyone to visit them yet, only video call. [Join Voice Chat]	Robin is in hospital after their suicide attempt. The hospital staff does not allow anyone to visit them yet, only video call. [Join Voice Chat]	You're in hospital after your suicide attempt. The hospital staff does not allow anyone to visit you yet, only video call. [Join Voice Chat]	It's Robin_'s 18th birthday. You video call them. [Join Voice Chat_]	It's Robin_'s 18th birthday. You video call them. [Join Voice Chat_]	It's your 18th birthday. Leslie_ and Cory_ video call you. [Join Voice Chat_]	Nothing.
3	A couple of days later. You're alone, writing a letter to Leslie. [Leave Voice Chat , write in #harper]	A couple of days later. Robin is still in hospital You video call them. [Join Voice Chat]	A couple of days later. You are still in hospital Cory video calls you. [Join Voice Chat]	A couple of days later. You're alone, writing a letter to Harper. [Leave Voice Chat , write in #leslie_]	A couple of days later. You video call Robin_. [Join Voice Chat_]	A couple of days later. Cory_ video calls you. [Join Voice Chat_]	Remind Leslie_ and Harper to post what they've written. You don't have to forward it anywhere yet.
4	A couple of days later. You're supposed to pick Robin up from hospital later today. You video call them. [Join Voice Chat]	A couple of days later. Robin will soon get released from hospital. You are writing an email to Harper about your relationship. [Leave Voice Chat , write in #cory]	A couple of days later. Harper is supposed to pick you up from hospital later today. They video call you. [Join Voice Chat]	A couple of days later. You video call Robin_. [Join Voice Chat_]	A couple of days later. You are writing an email to Leslie_ about your relationship. [Leave Voice Chat , write in #cory_]	A couple of days later. Leslie_ video calls you. [Join Voice Chat_]	3 min in, post to #cory_ telling them that their mother is dying in hospital and that they have one last chance to talk to her. Give them access to Phone Call and briefly roleplay their dying mother there. Remind both Corys to post what they've written at least 2 min before the end. Post each of these letters to the channels of Harper and Leslie_ accordingly.
Attention: Your operating system is undergoing a system upgrade. You might notice unusual quantum effects, e.g. minor glitches in video calls or temporary access to entangled files. We apologise for any inconvenience this might cause. The upgrade will last approximately 40 minutes. WINDOWS Q: harnessing the power of quantum computing.							Post this notice to all named channels.
5	You're video calling Cory. [Join Voice Chat]	You're video calling Harper. [Join Voice Chat]	Your computer is prompting you to test your webcam now, you might as well do that. [Join Webcam Test]	You're video calling Cory_. [Join Voice Chat_]	You're video calling Leslie_. [Join Voice Chat_]	Your computer is prompting you to test your webcam now, you might as well do that. [Join Webcam Test]	Give both Robins access to Webcam Test . 2 min into the scene, swap Harper and Leslie_ between the two Voice Chat channels. 8 min into the scene, swap them back. 5 min in, send Robin's suicide note to Leslie_ and Cory_ and send Robin_'s email to Harper and Cory.
6	You got disconnected! You notice you received a weird email. [Leave Voice Chat]	You got disconnected! You need to tell Robin what happened! [Join Voice Chat]	Cory is calling you. [Join Voice Chat]	You got disconnected! You notice you received a weird email. [Leave Voice Chat_]	You got disconnected! You need to tell Robin what happened! [Join Voice Chat_]	Cory_ is calling you. [Join Voice Chat_]	Send the letters Leslie and Harper have written in scene 3 to their counterparts. After a couple of minutes, give both of them access to Webcam Test and tell them to join that channel. 2 min into the scene, swap Cory and Cory_. 8 min into the scene, swap them back.
7	Robin is calling you. [Join Voice Chat]	You got disconnected! Your system is preventing you from making video calls until you test your webcam! [Join Webcam Test]	You got disconnected! You want to call Harper now - you are hoping you will get to talk to Leslie_. [Join Voice Chat]	Robin_ is calling you. [Join Voice Chat_]	You got disconnected! Your system is preventing you from making video calls until you test your webcam! [Join Webcam Test]	You got disconnected! You want to call Leslie_ now - you are hoping you will get to talk to Harper. [Join Voice Chat_]	Give both Corys access to Webcam Test . 2 min into the scene, swap Harper and Leslie_. 8 min into the scene, swap them back. 5 minutes into the scene, send Cory's letter to Leslie_ and Cory_'s letter to Harper.
8	You want to talk to your entire family before the update completes. It is possibly the last chance to resolve some things. [Join Voice Chat]			You want to talk to your entire family before the update completes. It is possibly the last chance to resolve some things. [Join Voice Chat_]			Swap a different mirrored pairs of players every couple of minutes. 5 min in, post "System upgrade will complete in: 5 minutes." to every named channel. 10 min in, restore them to the initial groups and post "System upgrade complete. Thank you for your patience. WINDOWS Q: The best choice for you and your family. [The larp itself will end in 5 minutes]".

[A spreadsheet version of this schedule.](#)

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