

Missing You

a hybrid letter-writing / video chat larp about love, loss, and nostalgia; for two players
by Chance J. Feldstein

About the Game

In this game, you will play two people who miss each other terribly. They might have been friends, family members, or lovers. Whichever it was, they're no longer in each other's lives. There's an old place each of them goes, just to feel closer to the person they used to know. During one of these visits, they both look into the same reflective surface at midnight, and suddenly they can see each other's faces. How can it be?

After a brief conversation, the image in the mirror fades. Each character is left staring at their own reflection. They assume it was all in their minds, and will never happen again. But one writes a letter to the other, and soon finds it has disappeared. A reply appears the next day. The mirror continues to work, once in a while, but most of their correspondence from now on is letters and artwork. It becomes clear that the person writing these letters is not who your character remembers, but a version from a parallel universe. They are missing their version of you too, but lost them in a different way. Perhaps this is a second chance for you both.

As you get to know these new variations on an old theme, your growing connection warps reality around you. When the time comes, will you choose to meet? Or will you decide not to, for the safety of both worlds?

What You Will Need

2 players who trust each other

Paper, pens, arts & crafts supplies, and envelopes; or two email accounts with rich-text or HTML capability

A shared document or spreadsheet, to track Lines, Veils, Roads, and your relationship's Cosmic Bond stat

A virtual presence system (such as [gather.town](#) or [Second Life](#)), or the ability to meet in person, for final scene

A 100-sided die (d100); or an [online die-roller](#)

Before You Begin

Decide how your characters used to know each other. Were they friends, family, lovers...? How close were they? How did each lose the other, in their world? (*Examples: death; disappearance; they joined a cult; they told you they never wanted to see you again; their family convinced them to stop seeing you*) Finally, choose the **Comfort Location** where they go when they feel lonely. The only requirement is both have access to it, and it has a large reflective surface - either a full-length glass mirror, or a body of water (pond, lake, etc.).

Begin with a conversation about how much emotional intensity you both want, and how long you want to play. Find a frequency of letter-writing you can both agree on - perhaps one or two per week, or every two weeks. Determine which topics you wish to exclude, and which you want to steer toward, using [this consent checklist](#). Topics you enthusiastically consent to roleplay about are **Roads**, marked in green. If a player marks a topic yellow, it is a **Veil**. Veils may be included in letters or video scenes, but vaguely and briefly. A topic marked red is a **Line**, and may not be used at all. You add new Lines or Veils at any time. No need to give a reason.

This game also uses a modified version of the safety mechanic [The Door is Open](#). This means you are free to stop playing the game at any time, no questions asked. Or you may take a break. **Please play with kindness.**

How to Play (Script)

Missing You is played through letters and occasional video chat, with the possibility of a final in-person or virtual scene. Each Act begins with a Midnight Reflection (below), followed by a period of exchanging letters. Reread the About This Game section on p. 1, and then follow the script below.

Cosmic Bond, and How it Shapes Play. Your relationship in this game has one stat: **Cosmic Bond**, which starts at 1 and can go as high as 99. Track it in a shared spreadsheet. This stat measures how close your relationship is, and how much that closeness is warping your worlds. As Cosmic Bond climbs, [weird, spooky stuff](#) will happen to your characters more often. Its level determines how long the game will take. **Add 2 points to Cosmic Bond every time you send a letter. If you include photos or other art with a letter, add an additional 1 point. You may subtract 1-3 points, if the other character insults or offends your character.** (This means that if you want the game to take longer, give your characters a more challenging relationship.) **Once Cosmic Bond reaches 15, the characters start having visions of each other creating art (p. 3).**

Video Scene 1 - Midnight Reflection. The first video scene in this game is the first **Midnight Reflection** between the two characters. While each visiting the same Comfort Location, in their own universes, your characters look into the reflective surface (natural or man-made) at midnight and suddenly can see and hear each other. It's been years, possibly longer, and you thought you'd never talk again. Set a timer for 5 minutes, and roleplay this conversation. When the timer goes off, the images in the mirrors fade, and the sound is cut off (even if that's mid-sentence). Conditions for further Video Scenes are under **Midnight Reflections**, below.

Epistolary Scene 1. The next day, **Player 1** (choose which one that is) receives a small, black obsidian box. Chiseled into the lid are the words "Interdimensional Post". The box contains a single drawer, which pops open when you notice the box. It closes only when you insert an envelope addressed to the other character, with a real letter inside. The letter may be about whatever you wish, but I suggest starting with your character's feelings about what happened last night. Once your character does this and closes the drawer, the box cannot be opened until after it vanishes, at midnight that night. (*Simulate this out-of-character by sending the letter through postal mail (recommended), or emailing it.*) Add 2 points to your relationship's Cosmic Bond.

Epistolary Scene 2. **Player 2**, two days after talking with your lost loved one in the mirror or body of water, your character receives the odd obsidian box, with their first letter from the other character in it. Write a letter back to them, using the Letter Writing Guidelines on p. 3. Add 2 points to Cosmic Bond.

Continue with Epistolary Scenes, until your Cosmic Bond triggers another Midnight Reflection:

Midnight Reflections and Meeting Attempts. Any time your Cosmic Bond is a multiple of 11 (22, 33, etc.), the universes come into alignment in a Midnight Reflection at the Comfort Location. Use the same rules as Video Scene 1. If your Cosmic Bond is at least 15, you may try to step through the mirror, using these rules:

- 1. Attempting to meet:** Roll d100 and add your relationship's Cosmic Bond to the number on the die. If the result is at least 100, one character can pass through the mirror into the opposite universe. **Proceed to Ending 1** (p. 4). Otherwise, use the rules below for Failed Meeting Attempts.
- 2. Failed Meeting Attempts (+5 points to Cosmic Bond):** Even though failing to meet is disappointing, it strengthens the bond between you, and [makes everything weirder](#) in both worlds.
 - a. Roll d100 again. If you roll 01, the mirrors shatter, sucking you in. **Proceed to Ending 3.**
 - b. Otherwise, within a week of the missed meeting, you are each involved in a highly disturbing "impossible" event. Discuss these occurrences in your next letter.

- c. You may not attempt another meeting until your Cosmic Bond reaches the next multiple of 11. If it is already at 99, you must send a total of 3 more letters before your next try.

Letter Writing Guidelines

1. **High Weirdness.** As your Cosmic Bond climbs, the [stranger](#) your worlds become. Check the level before writing a letter. If it's at 20-30, the phenomena you're seeing no longer make sense. At 50-60, your character regularly experiences [scary things](#) they don't believe in. 80-90 is [cosmic horror](#) level.
2. **Roads (p. 1).** Try to incorporate some of your own preferred topics, and some of the other player's.
3. **Consider hand-writing your letter, for a more personal feel.**
4. **Acknowledgment and thanks.** (Examples: "It was great to hear from you", "Thank you for the beautifully decorated letter", "I'm so grateful to have you in my life.")
5. **"I miss you" statement.** (Examples: "I was looking forward to your letter all week", "I wish we could talk more often", "I often think about what you might be doing")
6. **Questions and comments about their last letter.**
7. **Discuss one or more of the letter-writing prompts, starting on the next page.**
8. **Share some of the things you and your lost loved one did together, or liked to talk about.**
9. **You may include drawings, paintings, or photos. If your Cosmic Bond is at least 15, whenever your character makes art, your partner's character can see through their eyes.** This can include decorating your paper and envelope with craft supplies, or adding images, fonts, and colors to email.
10. **Add 2 to your Cosmic Bond after sending the letter.** Add 1 more point, if you included photos or art.

Prompts for Letter Writing

(Most of these can be used more than once.)

1. How did you lose the other person? What do you remember about the last time you saw each other?
2. How has your life changed since you lost the other person? How do you feel about these changes?
3. Describe some of the new people in your life, since you saw or talked to each other last.
4. You loved the person you lost, but how much did you trust them? How much does that matter now?
5. Describe something terrifying that happened to you. How did you overcome your fear?
6. Describe a situation that made you furious. What did you do with the anger?
7. Describe a situation that made you cry or want to cry. How did you get through it?
8. Describe a situation when you felt very lonely, and thinking of the other person got you through it.
9. When you felt powerless or helpless, something you learned from the other person saved you. How?
10. Describe a situation in which you had to react to violence, the way your lost loved one would have.
11. You've recently changed in ways you didn't expect. Explain how this happened, and what it means.
12. Describe a time you experienced something supernatural or "impossible". How did it affect you?
13. Describe an opportunity or situation that inspired you to be your best self. How did it happen?
14. Describe one of your most important interests. Why do you want to share it with the other person?
15. Describe yourself with a short phrase. (e.g. *anxious artist, tired teacher, passionate queer activist*)
16. What will you become? Describe your future self. If you like, use an archetype from one of [these pages](#).
17. Describe something that you don't want to share with the other person, but you feel like you ought to.
18. There's a question you always wanted to ask the other person, but you didn't get a chance. Ask it now.
19. You worry the other person will judge you for something you've done. Why, and what did you do?
20. How does this person compare with the version you lost? How are your worlds different?

(Recommended) You may journal, or create art or music (including playlists), to explore your character's thoughts, feelings, and actions between letters. However, it's not required to play.

How to End the Game

Ending 1: Decide to Meet. If you succeed on your meeting attempt, it's time for an in-person or virtual meeting for your **Ending Scene**. Roleplay being together for the first time. What does it mean for you? Take as much time as you like. The portal in the mirror remains open until you decide what to do. Will one of you remain a guest in the other's world? Will you each return where you came from, alone? Once you make your choice and act on it, the portal closes, ending the scene. Subtract half your Cosmic Bond score. Using the portal burns away much of it, but the phenomena connected with your new Cosmic Bond level will follow you forever.

Ending 2: Decide Not to Meet. After trying to meet and failing a few times, your characters may decide that meeting is not a good idea. This isn't really the person they used to know, and it seems like forces are aligned against them. Maybe it's a good idea to pay attention to that. This ending is triggered if the characters agree that they will not meet. The obsidian box continues to appear to each character every so often, disappearing after a few days even if no letter is placed in the drawer. Every month the characters don't use the box, their Cosmic Bond drops by 5. Each gets a written or verbal **Epilogue** describing what they do next, and how their life looks a few years later.

Ending 3: The Portal Becomes a Vortex. Perhaps it's an accident, or maybe one of you breaks their mirror on purpose. You are each sucked through your reflective surface, and are now guests somewhere entirely new. Your Cosmic Bond drops to 0, after transporting you both to a third universe. In your **Epilogue** or **Ending Scene** (as above), describe or roleplay this place you must now explore and survive. Are you together or separate? Does one of you resent the other, for stranding them here? Or is this an exciting new opportunity?

Debriefing (Optional) - Discuss Some of the Following

After playing, how do you feel about love, loss, and relationships? What were some of the most intense parts for you? What do you want to keep from your character? What do you want to leave behind? You may explore your answers by in-person discussion, video or text chat, physical letters to each other, solo journaling, or art.

Designer's Note on Influences

Unknown Armies has lived in my head rent-free ever since I first played it, a little over 20 years ago. I love the way its Passions, Obsession, and Stress Gauges can map the emotional core of a character, so I have let them inspire some of my letter-writing prompts. *UA*'s percentile-based, customizable skills keep combat swift and the narrative moving. As a nod to them, *Missing You* uses different but numerically compatible mechanics for the Cosmic Bond stat. What draws me to *UA* most is its setting. I enjoy its emphasis on the occult as an underground phenomenon, a realm of myth difficult to process in a rational way. One magic system for those who walk the path of an archetype (avatars), and another for Obsessed weirdos (adepts) who impose their will on reality. Modern fantasy / horror mixed with magical realism. A world that feels unpredictable, strange, nightmarish, yet familiar. *UA* also has a great fan community; I've included some links to spark the imagination.

For *Missing You*, I wanted to evoke the atmosphere of what the *Unknown Armies* core book would call an Unnatural phenomenon, centered on an intense relationship between two people whose supernatural connection disrupts reality. I was already most of the way through writing this game, when I realized that some time ago, I wrote a fan piece [describing Nick Bantock's *Griffin and Sabine* books in terms of the *UA* mythos](#). This game is as much a love letter to *Griffin and Sabine* as it is to *UA*, and it seems that a seed for it has been sitting in my mind for more than 10 years. I'm proud of what that seed has grown into, and excited to share it.

For Unknown Armies Players and GMs

If you don't want to know exactly how I think the strange forces in this game work, or where they might have come from, read no further. Spoilers and unofficial fan content make up the rest of this section.

But in case you want to use it in a *UA* game, the Cosmic Bond stat is set up so that it can work like any other Soul skill in *UA2*. When the characters are in the same universe, it also functions as both a bond and a proxy (*UA3, Book 1: Play*, p. 182-3). One or both characters could even have Cosmic Bond as their Obsession skill... but wow, I really don't want to know what that relationship looks like.

I'm thinking of the Interdimensional Post box as linked to an otherspace that finds versions of people who have lost each other, and connects them. I imagine it was created as a dream project between a godwalker of the Messenger and an Amoromancer. (If you're using one of the alternative relationships below that makes the game about time travel rather than parallel universes, the Amoromancer becomes a [Chronomancer](#) instead.)

This little mod should be compatible with my other alternate-universe and time travel fan work for *UA*: [Griffin and Sabine](#), [Tangent Universe](#) (in which the mirror or body of water would be both the Vessel and the Portal), and [Silencio](#).

Alternative Character Relationships

- **Alternative Romantic or Friendly option**
 - Two characters who live in the same world, who are separated by time period and possibly region as well. You feel drawn to each other, but you don't know exactly why at first. For this version, the box will say "Inter-Era Post".
- **Alternative Familial Options**
 - Modern person, and a dead relative or historical figure they wish they had known. For this version, the message box will say "Inter-Era Post".
 - Variant versions of the same person, whose greatly differing lives fulfill each other's dreams. They could be in different universes, variant timelines, or could be different reincarnations of the same soul in different time periods.

Playing for Transformation

This game is designed to generate a large volume of ephemera (physical objects created through gameplay), for later reference or perusal. I suggest players who are [steering for emancipatory bleed](#), or playing for any other type of [personal transformation](#), take pictures or make copies of their letters and envelopes before sending them. You'll be able to use these, along with the letters you receive, to create a complete scrapbook of your Epistolary Scenes for analysis, inspiration, and reflection. Recording Video Scenes may also be helpful.

Inspirations

PC games: *The Longest Journey / Dreamfall* trilogy by Ragnar Tørnquist, Didrik Tollefsen, et al.; *Life Is Strange* by Raoul Barbet Michel Koch et al.

Books: *Anansi Boys* by Neil Gaiman, *Coyote Blue* by Christopher Moore, *Griffin and Sabine* by Nick Bantock, *His Dark Materials* trilogy by Philip Pullman, *1Q84* by Haruki Murakami

Movies: *The Fountain* (dir. Aronofsky), *Cloud Atlas* (dir. The Wachowskis), *Everything Everywhere All At Once* (dir. The Daniels), *Lola Rennt (Run Lola Run)* (dir. Tom Tykwer), *Frequency* (dir. Gregory Hoblit), *The Lake House* (dir. Alejandro Agresti)

TV: *Doctor Who* (*Doomsday*; The River Song arc), *Fringe*, *Star Trek* (all mirror universe episodes; DS9 "The Sound of Her Voice")

TTRPG: *Unknown Armies* (2nd & 3rd Editions)

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