



TAKE THE LIGHT

GM-less, freeform LARP for 1-8 players about guiding a
Body through a Space to escape a Situation

By Mary Woodard



ABOUT THE GAME

I wasn't planning to make a game about my experiences with Dissociative Identity Disorder, but my therapist encouraged me to develop this game specifically for helping people with DID — both to help map their own systems and give others a lens into their inner worlds. I am not a medical professional, I am not an expert on mental health, but I do have 30 years of being a Body piloted through Situations. I hope this helps you understand people like me a little bit more.

As such, this game is about letting your subconscious go crazy; it's about saying the first thing that comes to mind; it's about aggressive *Yes And-*ing yourself and your fellow players; it's about control and the loss of it in crucial moments; and it's about a communal care for something you've helped build together.

However, this game is *not* about the struggles of mental illness; it's not about being cruel to the Body or your fellow players; and it's not about getting your way all the time.

Hold the Light... but let it be shared, too.

Nobody wants to live in the dark.



ON SOLO PLAY



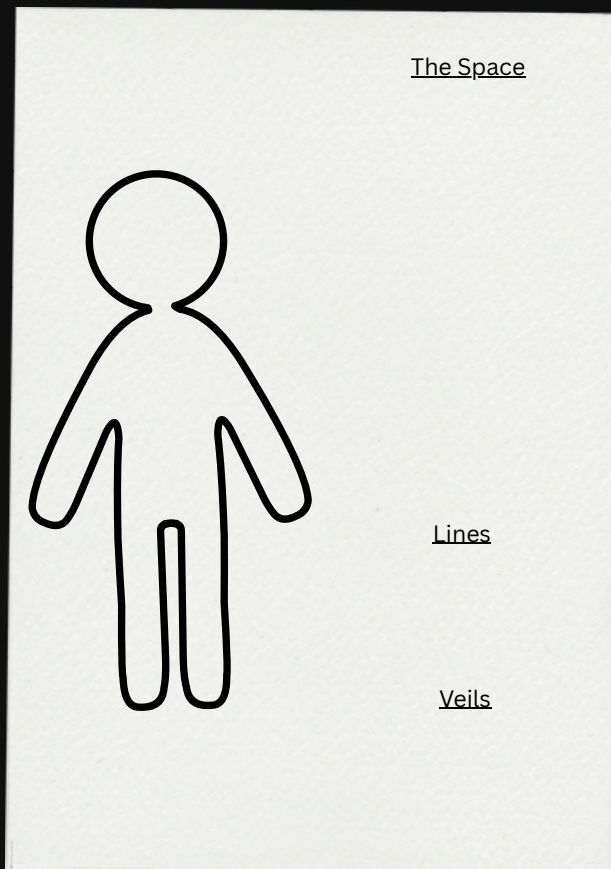
You are welcome to play this game solo. If you're a plural system, you can allow your alters to act as separate players for set-up purposes. If you aren't a system, here's some adaptations and advice for solo play:

- During set up, decide how many Wayfarer roles you want to use (recommended 2-3, as it can be difficult with more); treat each role as a player and follow set-up accordingly for that many players
- Spend some time with the roles you want to use and get into the mindset for each one. Ask yourself what decisions you might make in those headspaces using some menial task as an example (doing chores, running errands, etc).
- When it comes time to play, speak aloud to force your brain to slow down. Use 3rd person statements about the Body to grant yourself some distance.
- Trust your subconscious – you're not telling a clean story. You're exploring a Space with a Body, and weirdness happens in both.

THE SET UP

You will need a piece of paper or other notetaking method (Google Docs, a Discord channel, etc) and a way to keep time (a phone, stopwatch, analog clock, etc). If you are playing in person, it is recommended to have a flashlight or other talking piece to indicate whose turn it is.

Set up the paper with sections for Lines and Veils, The Space, and The Body. Discuss Lines and Veils with your players now and include any other safety mechanics your group feels should be added. Fill out the Lines and Veils and put the document somewhere that all players can access and view during the game.



Everything exists within a space. Players must decide what kind of space this is. Decide the Space using these four questions:

1. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being "Mundane" and 10 being "Surrealist Sci-Fi/Fantasy", where do we want this space fall on that scale?
2. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being "Serious" and 10 being "Late Night Comedy Routine", what kind of situation do we want to occur in this space?
3. What kind of feeling do we want to get from this space?
4. What kind(s) of space(s) would best embody the rankings we selected?

Write a short tag line description of the Space based on this discussion – "Magical Office", "Salvador Dali Painting", "Desolate Space Station Far From Earth", etc – and include your rankings for both scales. This will help remind everyone of details about the scenario. Avoid adding a ton of description to the Space as that will come during play.



Next, all the players must build the Body. The Body can be any combination of physical features, mental traits, or details about their life. By giving these traits to the Body, they become important to the Body – they are things to be used and utilized as they navigate the space.

Every player will add two traits to the Body using the snake method – all players go in order adding one trait then in reverse order to add the second trait. So if there's 3 players, Player 1 will start and add a trait, then Player 2, then Player 3 will add TWO traits before sending it back to Player 2, ending with Player 1 adding the last trait. Write or draw the traits on or around the Body to finish the set up sheet.

THE WAYFARERS



Every player will be embodying a Wayfarer — a guiding force that, when in possession of the Light, controls the Body and describes the Space.

All Wayfarers are driven by two things:

1. They want what's best for the Body
2. They want to escape the Situation, as it is decidedly NOT good for the Body.

Each Wayfarer also has their own drive and skill that encourages them to interact with the Space and the Body in a specific way. Wayfarers should want to fulfill their drive when possible while also adhering to the two general drives above, however you are not always beholden to your drives — these are guides, not rules.

Skills are unique abilities that only that Wayfarer can do, such as stealing the Light or talking without it. These *are* mechanical rules that should be followed.

Each Wayfarer can only be selected once; either negotiate who gets which Wayfarer, or use a D8 to randomize the roles.

**When playing with 2 or less players, only use the first 4 Wayfarers*

1. THE CORE

The Wayfarer closest to the Body

Drive: Builds on what other Wayfarers have discovered — use what the Body and Space already has.

Unique Skill: Cannot be forced to surrender the Light or take the Light

2. THE HOST

The Wayfarer who usually holds the Light

Drive: Discovers new things within the Space and about the Body through careful observation

Unique Skill: Always starts the game with the Light

3. THE CARETAKER

The Wayfarer who keeps the Body safe

Drive: Solves problems and clears the way

Unique Skill: Can hold the Light for twice as long before being stolen

4. THE MEMORY HOLDER

The Wayfarer who remembers all

Drive: Pulls from past memories related to the Space and situation

Unique Skill: Can reach out to one other Wayfarer per turn for consultation

5. THE INTROJECT

The Wayfarer who resembles someone, fictional or real

Unique Skill: Select a Wayfarer already being played, and use that Wayfarer's Drive and Skill (If you pick the Host, you will immediately get the light after the Host at game start)

6. THE PROSECUTOR

The Wayfarer who values tough love

Drive: Finds problems and, when none are present, creates them

Unique Skill: Always selects which Wayfarer gets The Light after them

7. THE GATEKEEPER

The Wayfarer who guards the Light

Drive: Strategizes the best plan to escape

Unique Skill: Once per turn, can block another Wayfarer from taking the Light ("You are denied the Light")

8. THE SELF-HELPER

The Wayfarer whose voice cuts through the dark

Drive: Reminds the Body — and fellow Wayfarers — it is not alone

Unique Skill: Allowed to talk to the other Wayfarers when not holding the Light, but cannot directly control the Body

THE GAMEPLAY

- Choose one Wayfarer to run the timer. They should hold a fist by their head to indicate 30 seconds – practice this motion as a group.
 - During the game, with the exception of the Self-Helper, the Wayfarers will not be able to communicate verbally unless they are holding the Light.
 - Whoever holds the Light can move the Body and describe the Space; they can interact with objects, have internal thoughts, hold conversations with people, observe the Body, or do any number of other things that a Body could typically do in a Space like the one you've decided to navigate*.
- *This means if it's magical/surreal, you can make weird shit happen; if it's realistic, stick to the laws of reality as we know them.
- The Host always starts first; otherwise, use another method to select who starts.
 - The Wayfarer holding the Light gets 30 seconds uninterrupted from when they start speaking to describe what's happening; the Light cannot be taken from them during this time.
 - After 30 seconds have passed, at any point, another Wayfarer can say "I take the Light" to take over from where the previous Wayfarer left off. If playing in person, pass the flashlight or talking piece to the new Wayfarer and reset the timer if needed.
 - Play continues until it is decided the Body has successfully escaped the situation OR the Wayfarers decide to extinguish the Light

ADVICE ON PLAY

Initially, "escape" may be a vague concept – Does that mean leaving the room? Leaving the building? Avoiding a conversation? What's keeping you here, anyway? Maybe you need to retrieve something or finish a task? Maybe the space is a puzzle room you need to figure out? Maybe you just can't find a way to politely remove yourself from an awkward family dinner and you need to resort to drastic measures?

Those questions will be clarified as you play. This will be a very short game if there are no barriers to leaving the Space – so notice them. Use the Light to illuminate them for the other Wayfarers to be aware of. Present problems to be solved and hindrances to be overcome. Think of your own body – how often do you start doing something that seems simple that somehow becomes significantly more complicated than intended? There are many things outside of our control, and all we can do is call attention to them so we can begin resolving them. As a rule of thumb, do not introduce a problem and immediately resolve it – highlight it for your fellow Wayfarers, and trust them to find a way around or through.

The game ends when the Wayfarers decide it's over – either the Body has escaped, or the Wayfarers feel it's a good stopping point. Ideally, gameplay will run about 30-60 minutes, but you can go longer or shorter if desired.

When the game ends, take a moment to derole – whatever that looks like for you – and settle back into your own body, **with your own light.**