

the god that lives where the cigarette butts grow

By Zoe Bloom

Introduction

You are a bunch of regular kids with astoundingly bad luck, which you blame on the god who lives out back in the woods, a few skips past the crick and on the other side of the crow's nest. You know. Where the cigarette butts grow.

You're pretty sure the god is one of you. Like, you can't prove it, but you *know*. Strange things happen when you're all together. Roses grew from concrete when you were looking for tin cans to sell. You were trying to study for the next exam at school, but then an ice cream truck broke down and you and all your friends wasted the whole afternoon licking up every drop. You heard that there was a pothole on St. Basil St, and instead of it getting fixed up, the next day there was graffiti. One of you is cursed! You're going to figure out whomst.

Some of you think that the god that lives where the cigarette butts grow is useless. Some like the god, despite all the trouble it causes. Some are still really upset about that ice cream truck thing. Some serve the god in secret, and some serve the enemy. Some are determined that all of the god's actions have a purpose. Some are just there because everyone else is and you had nothing better to do. Regardless, by the end of the session, the god will be revealed, and you must all decide what to do with it.

Things You'll Need for In-Person Play:

- Paper
- Pens
- Scissors
- Maybe a scorekeeper
- Probably some dice (2D6, a D8) and a pack of playing cards
- At least 4-6 people
- Ambiance

Things You'll Need for Online Play:

- Some sort of token accountability system, whether by keeping track in a Discord or Slack channel or by using Roll20's various token devices.
- At least 4-6 people
- Ambiance

Ambiance here means: the dirty and scroungy. If your room doesn't have trash, throw some on the floor. The nearest trash can is too far away, and it's not like it matters. Put on a local radio station; what matters most here is that you can't control what songs come on, only how loud it is. If you don't have graffiti, make some; or throw a couple chairs on the ground so they can't be sat on. Your environment should be in inexplicable, careless disarray, regardless of how you present yourself or what you prefer. Even if you fixed it, it'd just be the same five minutes later anyways.

Individual Characters

Begin with a character you can see yourself playing. Decide your name, and pick 1-3 interests. You may add to these as you see fit in-game. Then fill in these three sentences:

- I wish _____ .
- I need _____ .
- I have _____ .

These aren't going to be relevant to anyone but yourself, unless it makes sense to do so in game, but they're good characterization notes.

Connections

You should have at least 4-6 people in your group. Argue over which of you is the youngest, which of you is the oldest, which of you is the most popular, which of you is the least popular, which of you has the best grades and which of you has the worst; explain why. Whoever has the most convincing argument (as voted on by the group) wins the title.

As you play the game, be sure to follow your interests and build more connections with other people, both friendly and acrimonious.

Gameplay

Gameplay consists of a series of bets as the players wait for the god that lives where the cigarette butts grow to be revealed. Find some arbitrary measure of wit, skill or luck to bet against with at least one other party. Gameplay stops when no one wishes to continue. The two win conditions are either losing the most contests, or winning the most tokens. If there is a tie for either of these conditions, both players win.

Initially each player will have 10 positive tokens with which to bet. Positive tokens should be made of whatever's convenient - skittles, paper, tickmarks - and be virtually indistinguishable from each other. If you run out of positive tokens, you may then pick up 10 negative tokens.

Negative tokens should also be made of whatever's convenient, but each bettor's negative tokens should be distinguishable from every other bettor's negative tokens. This can be signalled by initials, specific colors of skittles, or different types of items; what's important is that it is recognized among the players as a genuine, personal, and recognizable unit of trade. Negative tokens are unique from positive tokens in that they only have real value in someone else's possession. Your own negative tokens do not count towards your overall token score.

You'll also need to keep a record of contests. Elect a neutral scorekeeper to keep track of them, and be sure to report the results to them at the end of each contest. The scorekeeper does not receive any tokens of their own; however, they are allowed to join in betting contests, as long as they maintain their duties and have something the other contestants agree is worthy collateral. For other players, even if you have lost all of your tokens, you can still continue as long as you can offer something that other bettors want and can agree has significant value.

If a player has someone else's negative tokens, they may ask that person for a favor, in exchange for a mutually agreed upon amount of said tokens. Players should also feel free to trade or share tokens between themselves at their own discretion. Alliances and betrayals are perfectly legitimate strategies; however, remember that you all live on the same street, and your moms know each other.

Contests

Feel free to make up your own contests, but the following are places to start.

Basic Contests of Luck

- Flip a coin. Bet on whether it'll come up heads or tails.
- Roll a D8. The bettors bet on a number, their tokens going into a pool. Whichever number is closest to the one the die lands on is the winner. If people tie, remove the other players. Each player continuing adds another token to the pool, and the contest begins again.
- Play a few rounds of 2 Card Poker. [Rules can be found at this link.](#)

Basic Contests of Skill

- I bet I can stand on my head for a minute!
 - If your character has been established to be good at athletics but you cannot personally do this, you may roll 2D6 to see if you can. 7 or above is a success. Add a +1 or +2 if your character is good at athletics, whichever you can convince the others to accept.
- I bet I can recite the alphabet backwards!
 - If you can, I'm impressed.
- I bet I can eat 6 cigarettes!
 - Please do not actually eat 6 cigarettes. Feel free to simulate your character eating 6 cigarettes using some other form of mutually agreed upon divination.

Basic Contests of Wit

- The Picnic Game. The first bettor names an item they brought to the picnic, and puts a token into the pool. The second bettor names a new item they brought to the picnic, and the item the first bettor brought to the picnic, and then adds another token to the pool. Bettors continue until they either lose or drop out. A drop out does not count as a loss. Whoever is left standing takes the pool.
- Two Truths and a Lie. The challenger chooses the minimum wager, puts the minimum down, and declares two truths and a lie to the bettor. The bettor chooses the lie, and puts at least the minimum wager down. The challenger declares the lie. If the bettor was correct, they take their wager as well as the challenger's. If the challenger fooled the bettor, they take the bettor's wager as well as their own.
- Consider the games of Charades, I Spy, Pictogram, and Truth & Dare. Adapt them for your own purposes, but note that most will work better as one-on-one games, unless you're betting on the results!

Whoever has lost the most contests at the end of play is the god that lives where the cigarette butts grow. The one who has gained the most tokens is their enemy.

Conclusion

the god that lives where the cigarette butts grow explains their actions, reasoning, and power. The enemy questions them at every particular. The group is jointly holding a court session to decide whether to keep the god that lives where the cigarette butts grow in its divine authority or overthrow it and institute a new god. The enemy argues that the state of affairs needs to change, and explains what they would do where the old god has failed.

Individually and privately, vote on these issues. Have the person who kept the record tally the votes. Decide how the town changes, and whether or not a new god is elected.