



Jacqueline

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Hemophilic academics

Hemophiliacademics

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About the Author:

Jacqueline “Jax” Bryk (she/her) is a writer, LARPer, TTRPGeR, political administrator, trauma survivor, and unapologetic queer. She has written for Changeling: the Lost 2e, Vampire: the Masquerade 5e, KULT: Divinity Lost, They Came From Beneath The Sea!, Exalted 3e, and other games.

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INTRODUCTION

It is present day.

Vampires are real.

Vampires have been exposed publicly in the last year.

Vampires now flock to academia for safety, a food supply, careers, and friends.

Any vampire who does not get accepted into academia is fair game for hunters, priests, and mobs alike.

You are a vampire, or a human, or a dhampir. You are either an interviewer on a panel for a private university, interviewing applicants for a brand new special vampiric graduate student program – or else you are being interviewed. All of you know this is a matter of life and death, as well as academic enrichment.

There are only three spots available in this new program, and they can go to a vampire of any (academic!) discipline. The prevailing stereotype insists that vampires belong only in the history or anthropology departments, so the university may be more likely to accept applicants interested in these two.

The graduate student program only lasts for three years, and is only a temporary respite from being hunted. Vampires who are accepted may need to reapply or try to get a professorship or fellowship.

THEMES

This game is not-so-secretly about the racist, sexist, and classist machine of academia. You apply and pay for the privilege of providing free labor, physical and intellectual, for a university. Some providers of free labor (wealthy white cis males, usually) are treated better than others.

Please be aware of these prejudices when playing.



SAFETY

No one in this game may use any bigoted language to describe real-world characteristics of the players (e.g., body type, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, religion, gender and gender presentation, sexuality, etc.). The interviewers are not judging the players. They are judging the candidates. However, language used to describe personal characteristics of a character (e.g., life and unlfe, blood type, stereotype of the predatory vampire, etc.) may be used.

Make a list of acceptable fictional slurs and “benevolent bigotry” terms together and stick to them. “Benevolent bigotry” refers to things that sound complimentary or harmless, but aren’t. Post this list somewhere visible. Do not deviate from this list when insulting characters else.

While vampires in other settings can be a metaphor for predatory sexuality, there is to be no direct reference to sexual assault while playing this game.

The Door Is Always Open. Anyone may leave at any time for any reason.

Use the OK-check-in for calibration. If you want to make sure someone is ok with what you are doing, make an OK symbol (index finger to thumb making a circle, the other three fingers arched upward) with one hand and put it over your heart. The responding player should return one of the following:

- *Double thumbs up:* More of this! Ramp it up!
- *Thumbs up:* I’m doing ok.
- *Hand-waggle:* I’m not sure how I’m doing.
- *Thumbs down:* I am not ok and need to stop.

Anything other than a double thumbs up or a thumbs up means that surrounding players should check in with the struggling player. An OK symbol in return is not a proper response, give the symbol again or check-in with the player verbally.

This is a game about unequal power structures and desperation.

Don’t use it to be a jerk out of game.

Anyone not abiding by the social contract (“don’t be a jerk out of game”) may be asked to leave.

HOW TO PLAY

Get some players together. One should be a facilitator, though they can also play. The facilitator is the one who is responsible for getting the people into the space to play the game!

SETUP

Set up two rooms.

One is the interview room, and one is the waiting room.

The interview room should ideally have at least a panel table with an interview chair on the other side of it, and should be structured to make the candidate feel small. The waiting room should have plenty of seating. Or maybe not.

Once everyone is together in one of the rooms, read the *Introduction*, *Themes*, and *Safety* sections out loud as a group.

Create characters, or pick from the premade characters. Character creation and premade characters are in the Characters section.

Sit in a circle. Introduce your characters. Let everyone create a relationship with two other characters. Even if someone is picked for more than two relationships, they get to make two relationships of their own. Methods such as the yarn ball or fuck/marry/kill can be used here (even though that's three), depending on your group.

Decide if your individual characters are interviewers or candidates. As a rule, you should have more candidates than interviewers. This should be done *after* relationships are built.

Begin play.

PLAY

Interviewers: Take ten minutes in the interview room. Discuss what you are looking for in your graduate students. What do you value? What do you want to ask? Argue. Agree. Be grandiose and pretentious.

candidates: Take ten minutes to write a proposal. What do you bring to the table? Why should you be part of this program? What are your credentials? Try to sneak looks at other peoples' proposals. Ask questions. Chat lightly. Don't let them smell your fear.

PLAY CONTINUED

Once the ten minutes are up, interviewers should call in candidates one by one. This should be extremely tense – the interviewers hold all the power of entrance into this prestigious (and unlife-saving) program over the candidates. Even if the interviewers are rude and cutting and even dismissive, the candidate still needs to show off their best side. A candidate should be allowed to present their proposal without interruption, and then asked questions.

Interviewers can call candidates more than once to heighten the tension.

Once all candidates have been called in, perhaps more than once, the interviewers will make their decision as the candidates wait in the waiting room.

The game ends once the interviewers deliver their decision.





Sample Interview Questions

- What strengths do you bring to the program?
- What made you decide to apply?
- What are some of your major academic, professional, and personal interests?
- Do you foresee any challenges to you engaging with and completing this program?
- What do you feel are the traits of an effective adult student?
- What do you feel are the traits of an ineffective adult student?
- Tell a story about someone who inspired you in your desired field?
- Do you have experience with traditional education as we understand it today? Tell us about it.
- What do you think is most important to your field of choice?
- What do you hope to achieve in your desired field?
- Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten? A hundred?
- How are you with computers?
- Do you want to continue doing the sort of work you did in the past, or do you want to do something else?
- Tell us about your ideal graduate project.
- How does your preferred work connect with the existing strengths of the program?
- How do you plan to be a role model to other undeclared applicants and scholars?
- How much support do you expect to need from the university's systems?

CHARACTERS

There are two ways to engage with the game: creating custom characters or using the premade characters at the end of this game.

CHARACTER CREATION

To create a character, grab a notecard and write down the following bolded things. The italicized words are prompts and do not need to be written down.

Name: *This is your character's name. Try to have at least a first and last name.*

Pronouns: *These are the pronouns your character uses.*

Creature Type: *There are three creature types you can play in Hemophiliacademics. These are:*

- **Vampire:** *The living dead. Need to drink blood. Currently being hunted everywhere outside of academic institutions, where they are considered immortal knowledge repositories -- that is, if they are lucky enough to get a position on campus.*
- **Human:** *The living. Not being hunted. The hegemony. Normal lifespan. Eat food.*
- **Dhampir:** *Half-human, half-vampire, always a surprise. Some campuses treat them as vampires, others treat them as humans, and a few don't accept them at all. They have an extended lifespan and can eat food or drink blood. Also hunted by some groups.*

Description: *A couple of sentences, or even a couple of words, will do. This is to get a handle on your character and who they are as a person. Especially consider how they will react to stress.*

Chosen Field: *Are they into history, computer science, biology, earth sciences, fine arts, or something else? For interviewers, this is their professorial department. For candidates, this is their chosen major.*

PREMADE CHARACTERS

The following is a list of ten premade characters for *Hemophiliacademics*.

Name: Hai Davis
Pronouns: they/them
Creature Type: Dhampir
Description: Studious and serious. Caffeine addiction. In three different Greek societies. Always knew they would be going to grad school.
Chosen Field: Electrical engineering

Name: Nancy Hill
Pronouns: she/her
Creature Type: Human
Description: Middling grades as a college student. Posing as a vampire to try and get into the graduate program. Bad at communicating.
Chosen Field: Computer engineering

Name: Gale Joyner
Pronouns: he/him
Creature Type: Human
Description: Would really like to get bit by a vampire someday. Always mysteriously ill. Fascinated with different translations of the Iliad.
Chosen Field: Classics

Name: Carmilla Sexton
Pronouns: she/her
Creature Type: Vampire
Description: Only the most famous lesbian vampire in history. Now fearing for her unlife and doesn't like it. Confident. Queer.
Chosen Field: Fine arts

Name: Vladimir Radovich
Pronouns: he/him
Creature Type: Human
Description: Has an unfortunate name and a load of restraining orders against vampire hunters. Founded a nonprofit.
Chosen Field: Urban planning and public policy

Name: Lucy Hanson
Pronouns: she/her
Creature Type: Vampire
Description: Descendant of the Westenra family. Favors young blood. Gentle, kind, funny, and warm.
Chosen Field: Education

Name: Willie Dyer
Pronouns: they/them
Creature Type: Vampire
Description: A gentlevampire with a Southern accent. Speaks slowly, caught up in their own thoughts most of the time.
Chosen Field: Philosophy

Name: Amparo Velazquez
Pronouns: they/them
Creature Type: Vampire
Description: Loves plants of all kinds. Trying to figure out why some vampires are stopped by running water and rowan trees. Will ramble for hours.
Chosen Field: Horticultural sciences

Name: Larry Rivers
Pronouns: he/him
Creature Type: Human
Description: A classic Ivy League type, with all the whiteness that entails.
Chosen Field: Business

Name: Julie Cantrell
Pronouns: she/her
Creature Type: Dhampir
Description: Tries to pose as a human whenever possible. Especially when she has blood cravings. Insecure, loud, powerful.
Chosen Field: Nursing

