

SALLOW-SÉANCE



a role-playing game of gossip and terror...



A ROLEPLAYING GAME OF GOSSIP & TERROR

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It's Summer Break, and you're about to **die**.

You don't know who first suggested playing *Sallow-Face*... It was just supposed to be some dumb game like *Bloody Mary*, to help relax after another brutal year of high school drama.

But the monster known as Sallow-Face is **very real**, and you've **summoned him**. The doors and windows are locked- there's no way to fight back, no way to escape.

Well... there's one way. Sallow-Face prefers to **eat rotten souls**. He's willing to leave if you offer up the **most rotten soul** to him. Who among you has High School changed for the worse? Who's the class bully, who's spreading gossip and lies? You'll have to decide among yourself- because if you can't, Sallow-Face is going to eat **ALL** of you.

HOW TO PLAY

In this game, you play a teenager attending a slumber-party with your close friends. You've awoken a demon named **Sallow-Face**, who wants to eat **rotten souls**. You must **convince** Sallow-Face that your friends are **worse than you**, by telling Sallow-Face all of the **rumors** and **gossip** you can think of that **makes your friends look bad**.

The game is played in a series of rounds. Each round you will be trying to convince one player (who has taken on the role of Sallow-Face), that other players have behaved badly. At the end of each round, Sallow-Face votes for who they think is most guilty, based off the testimony.

After everyone has taking a turn playing as Sallow-Face the game ends... and whoever has the most votes is **eaten**.

WHO ARE YOU?

"My character is known for being a..."

JOCK

CHEERLEADER

PREP

GOTH

HIPSTER

CLASS CLOWN

PUNK

SOCIAL CLIMBER

NERD

ANIME KID

BAND GEEK

THEATRE GEEK

PROBLEM CHILD

TEACHER'S PET

RELIGIOUS KID

STONER

BULLY

EMO KID

PARTY ANIMAL

LONER

To start building your character, consider choosing one of the archetypes in the left-hand column as a place to start. You don't have to pick one if you don't want. Feel free to come up with your own, or merge several together- it's all up to you!



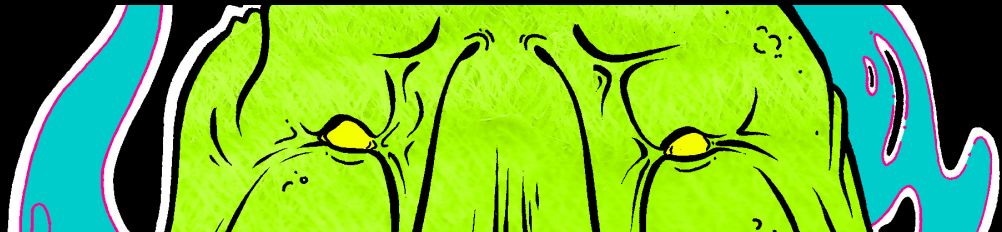
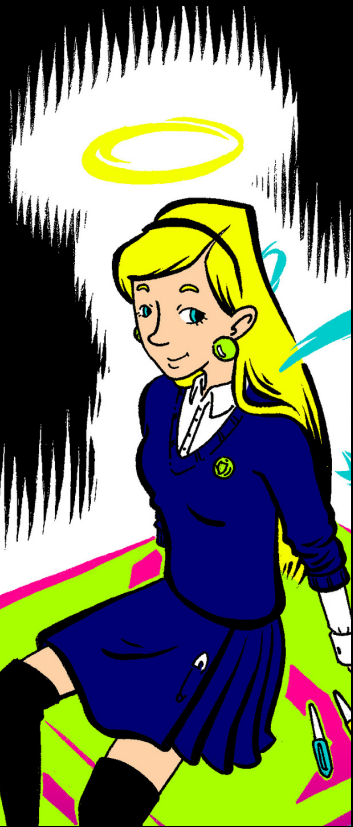
BUILDING YOUR SÉANCE

Before you play Sallow-Séance, you'll need to build your **characters**, their **relationships**, and the **school** you're all attending. Here are some questions to help- you can answer as many as you want, or discover them as you play!

- What is your **PROUDEST MOMENT**?
- What's the **DREAM** you've yet to accomplish?
- What **WEAKNESS** has High School exposed?
- What do you **HATE** more than anything else?
- What is your **FAVORITE MEMORY** together?
- How has High School **CHANGED** your relationship?
- What **GETS UNDER YOUR SKIN** about your friend?
- What have you always **ADMIRERD** about your friend?
- What is the **NAME** and **LOCATION** of the school?
- Is the school **PUBLIC** or **PRIVATE**?
- Is the school **WELL-FUNDED**, or **POORLY MAINTAINED**?
- Who is the **MASCOT** and what is the school **KNOWN FOR**?

And most importantly...

Why did you attend the party, and why did you participate in The Sallow-Face game...?



SETTING THE SCENE

If you're playing in person, consider dimming the lights and placing candles in the center of your circle. If you're currently possessed by Sallow-Face, try a voice- does he snarl? does he have a high-pitched giggle? Try your best to scare your friends!



**"Sallow-Face, Sallow-Face, why so thin?
Tell me a rumor, it'll make you grin..."**

THE SALLOW-FACE RHYME...

Sallow-Séance is played in as many rounds as there are players at the table. Each round the players rotate clockwise, with each player spending one round playing the role of **SALLOW-FACE**.

At the start of each round, the players chant the **SALLOW-FACE RHYME** (seen above) to the player in the role of Sallow-Face. At the end of the rhyme, Sallow-Face states the topic that the group will be discussing during the round.

Sallow-Face begins each rumor the same way:

"I've heard a rumor that someone..."

Sallow-Face doesn't name any names...
it's up to the players to fill in the gaps
and accuse their friends!



"AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY..."

After Sallow-Face gives the rumor topic, each player gets a chance to create and outline the specific rumor that they've heard going around school. They start the rumor by saying, "Well, what I heard was..." and conclude their rumor by saying, "At least, that's what they say..."

Each player in the round needs to be the focus of **ONE RUMOR**. Sallow-Face picks a random player to go first- once you've told a rumor about someone, your rumor-victim speaks next, focusing their rumor on a **new player**, and so on. You cannot create two rumors about the same person.

The person possessed by Sallow-Face has a **round reprieve**- they don't have a rumor generated about them.

After everyone is finished their opening statements, the round is an **open discussion**. Players argue and try to throw their friends under the bus, while Sallow-Face listens closely...



GAMEPLAY STRATEGIES

- Can you get away with remaining under the radar for a round, and keeping the attention on other players?
- If you are accused of a rumor, try to justify your behavior. Explain why what you didn't wasn't ALL that bad. Rationalize and excuse, provide context to reframe your behavior!
- No one is completely innocent all the time- pick and chose your battles wisely! Admitting to lesser guilts may help you dodge harsher accusations in the long run.
- Explain to Sallow-Face how others at the table are FAR more guilty than you. Accuse and scold, question everything your friends say.
- Is this rumor even true? Does it fit the characters involved, could it be a lie? Think about what has been said in previous rounds, contradict and obfuscate. Remember, Sallow-Face is the one who is voting, you only need to convince them!
- As the rounds go on, question the narrative- what motivation does your friend have in bringing up this specific rumor right now?

PLAYING AS... SALLOW-FACE



In Sallow-Séance, the line between fact and fiction is very blurry. There's **no way** to prove 100% that a rumor is true- **it's all hearsay**. You'll need to make a **rational** and **emotional** argument to convince Sallow-Face, without the use of any concrete evidence. Sure you can say you saw something happen... but will the other players trust you?

Sallow-Face is a demon that thrives on **juicy gossip** and **emotional conflict**. Each round, the player taking on the role of Sallow-Face has the power to squash rumors. If you suggest a rumor that is far-fetched, or if the actions don't fit with the character you're accusing, Sallow-Face will **grumble with displeasure**. Sallow-Face only wants tasty rumors!

Sallow-Face can **interject at any moment** to ask questions- the player taking on the role of Sallow-Face should try to **sow as much discord as possible**- ask leading questions, make players explain where they first heard the rumor, or ask players to speak badly about their friends. Try to poke holes in what people are saying, and create chaos!

VOTING

After ten minutes of discussion, or when there is a natural lull in the conversation, Sallow-Face calls the round to a halt by stating;

"Sallow-Face has made their judgement."

Conversation immediately ends, and Sallow-Face silently marks down who they believe to be the **most rotten**. **Keep all votes hidden until the end of the last round**. Sallow-Face wouldn't dare spoil the surprise and tell anyone how they're doing...

When voting as Sallow-Face, consider the following things...

- Who made the most compelling arguments during the round?
- Who looked the guiltiest, or had the most trouble defending their actions?
- Did anyone go overboard in their accusations? Remember you're Sallow-Face- you want to eat the rotten kids. Is anyone enjoying throwing stones **just a little too much?**

TALLYING THE VOTES

Once everyone has gotten a chance to play as Sallow-Face, the game ends. Players tally the votes- whoever has the most votes is deemed **the most rotten**, and Sallow-Face promptly **swallows them whole** in front of their horrified friends.

Sallow-Face then departs, leaving the remaining players relieved to be alive, and with a guilty conscience for the rest of their life...

THE X-CARD SYSTEM

Sallow-Séance is a game about high-school drama and vicious gossip. Your group may stray into dark territory and sensitive subject matter at times.

To keep players safe and to make sure everyone at the table is having fun, Sallow-Séance uses "X-Card", a system created by John Stavropoulos.

During the game, if a rumor or discussion topic occurs that makes you feel uncomfortable, simply say "X". (Alternatively, have a card with a written "X" upon it, and hold it up if you feel uncomfortable verbalizing.)

Immediately, the topic is considered X-Carded, and Sallow-Face will choose a new rumor to discuss that doesn't relate to the X-Carded subject. Everything related to the X-Carded subject is removed and does not factor into the votes or narrative going forward.

Be responsible and help create a safe and fun environment for everyone at the table!



For more information on the X-Card system and how to introduce it to your group, follow this link;
<http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>



EXAMPLE OF PLAY

The following is an example of play, to give you an idea of how a round of Sallow-Séance typically goes! Every game group is different- perhaps your game will be more silly, or more serious? There's no wrong way to play, as long as everyone is having fun!

In the following example, Megan, John & Colin are players, whereas Sarah is possessed by Sallow-Face for the round.

Megan, John & Colin: "Sallow-Face, Sallow-Face, why so thin? Tell me a rumor, it'll make you grin!"

Sarah: I heard a rumor... that someone cheated on a test...

Megan: Well, what I heard was that John was really struggling in Math class... He knew if he didn't pass the unit test, he'd get cut from the football team. People are saying how strange it is that he got just high enough to pass. At least, that's what they say...

John: Hey, I worked really hard on that test, I didn't cheat! Well, what I heard was Colin was boasting about how he'd been watching a bunch of those lockpicking youtube videos. I mean, if anyone was going to steal the answer key, they'd have to get into the staff room- and that's always locked unless someone's in there. At least, that's what they say...

Colin: Pff, yeah right, like I'd ever do that! Well, what I heard was Megan's always sitting next to Jillian Schmidt- and you know that girl's a mathlete. It's so strange, I mean, Megan never really talks to her outside of class, but those two are always giggling and passing notes. At least, that's what they say....

Sarah: Interesting, very interesting...

John: Well, I think honestly, it's really strange that Megan would be friends with Jillian and never ever talk about it. We all know Jillian's the smartest kid in class. Seems really self-serving to me.

Megan: What's the problem with being nice to someone? That's not a crime! Jillian helps me study, that's why we're so close- but I'd NEVER cheat.

John: But it'd be so easy for you to!

Megan: Look, there's lots of ways to cheat on a test, that's not the issue here. What we really should be thinking about is who had the most to lose if they failed the test, and that was definitely you, John!

Sarah: Colin, do you think John would be smart enough to cheat on a test if his football career was on the line?

Colin: Honestly, I think he'd try but I don't know if John's smart enough to actually get away with it.

John: Colin, what the heck!

Colin: What, I'm on your side! It's a compliment, in a way!

John: Ok, Megan brought up a good point just now, but she's looking at the wrong person. I remember you showed me a lockpicking video once Colin, you boasted and said you could break into any door if you wanted to. You're the only one who could actually break into the office to look at the answer key, because you'd KNOW how to do it.

Colin: Okay, well I straight up don't remember that happening, I think you're just making it up.

Megan: Super convenient answer, Colin. You said that last round too, didn't you? Isn't it weird how you don't remember anything?

Colin: You're just trying to take eyes off the fact that you CLEARLY cheat off Jillian Schmidt!

Sarah: Megan, wouldn't it be easy to cheat off Jillian if you're sitting right next to her?

Megan: No, because Jillian's always putting her pencil case up, and covering her paper.

Colin: A-hah! So you HAVE looked at her paper before?

Megan: No, I'm saying it'd be impossible to, if I ever DID try! I'm a great student, why would I need to cheat when I've never struggled before?

John: I don't know Megan, that sounds like a pretty weak excuse...

Colin: Yeah Megan, you say you get good grades... but how're we supposed to know that for sure?

RUMOR CHART

It may be tricky for you to come up with a rumor while taking on the role of Sallow-Face. Feel free to use some of the following prompts to inspire you!

FIGHT

"I heard a rumor there was a fight the other day..."

- Who was involved in the fight? Who was the aggressor and what caused the fight- bullying or something else? Did anyone get hurt? How did they get hurt? Was a weapon used? You know the answers, don't you?

LOCKER BREAK-IN

"I heard a rumor someone broke into a locker..."

- Schools have never been known to be the most secure location in the world- but who would break into a locker? What were they after? Did they succeed in getting what they wanted, was it a simple prank or something more sinister?

DRUGS

"I heard a rumor that someone's been involved with drugs..."

- Drugs are a constant problem in schools, and there are so many different kinds. Did someone start dealing, or just get caught? What kind of drugs are they selling, and who are they selling it to?

DRINKING MISHAP

"I heard a rumor that someone's been drinking..."

- Often underage drinking is seen as a "cool" thing to do... but this time, something went wrong. What happened? How exactly did these students get liquor in the first place?

JOYRIDE

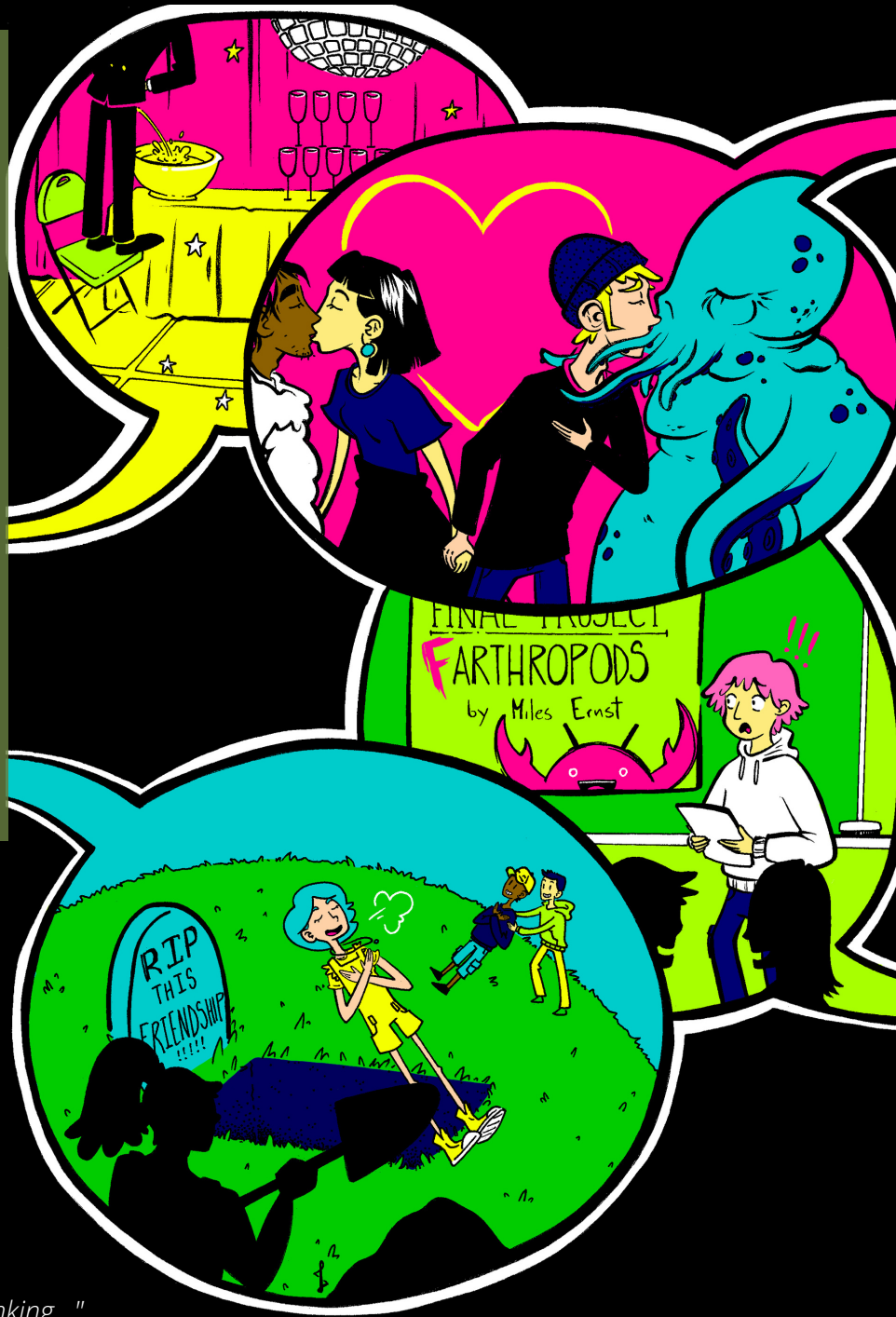
"I heard a rumor that someone took the family car out last night..."

- Whose car was taken, and what were the consequences? Did you get caught, or did the car get home safely? What happened on the joyride, and did the vehicle make it back in one piece?

EXCLUSION

"I heard a rumor that someone's being ignored..."

- Perhaps they once had friends, or perhaps they've always been alone. For whatever reason, no one is talking to a particular student. What has caused this to happen? Was it their own fault, or are they the victim of bullying?



THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

"I heard a rumor that something happened at a party..."

- House parties, often without adult supervision, are an expected part of High School life. This was a particularly crazy party- but what was the one event that everyone is going to remember? Did someone get drunk, did some a couple break up? Did the cops get called, was anyone arrested?

RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

"I heard a rumor that someone's having relationship troubles..."

- This could refer to a couple already together, or an unrequited crush. What's the problem with the relationship, has trouble been brewing for awhile? Is it an open secret, or do only a few people know the truth? Are the participants struggling to make it work, or is a break-up imminent?

ONLINE BULLYING

"I heard a rumor that someone's been posting online..."

- Bullying often doesn't end in the classroom, and we all know that social media can be very toxic. Someone is being bullied online- for what reason, and how are they being bullied? Is anything being done about it?

TEACHER FIRED

"I heard a rumor that a teacher's been fired..."

- It isn't everyday that a teacher is fired. Perhaps they were a popular teacher, or perhaps they weren't. Either way, rumors are bound to start swirling- What led to such a sudden dismissal? Were any students involved? Were any students responsible somehow?

STAYING WITH A FRIEND

"I heard a rumor that someone's sleeping on a couch..."

- For whatever reason, the person involved in this rumor can't go home right now. What's been happening over at their house? Why can't they go home- have they gotten involved with the wrong crowd, or had a falling out with their parents? Is it their fault, or their parents?

EXPELLED

"I heard a rumor that someone's been expelled..."

- This is the big one- someone's really messed up, and they've been expelled from school. This doesn't happen everyday- what did they do to deserve this? Was it their fault, or were other students involved? Did everyone get the same punishment or is one student shouldering all the blame? Is there any way to make this into a suspension instead?

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER CRIED

"I heard a rumor that someone made the teacher cry..."

- It's a common story, playing a prank on a teacher who can't control the class. But this time, it's gone a little too far. Someone has made the substitute teacher cry- who did it, and what did they do? Was this a group activity? Was it an innocent prank gone wrong?

VANDALIZED

"I heard a rumor that someone's been a vandal..."

- Perhaps someone covered a house in toilet paper, or maybe they were drawing graffiti at the back of the school. Maybe it was even more malicious- a brick through a window, or a trash can fire. What led to the vandalism, was it for laughs or to send a message?

PARTY OUT OF CONTROL

"I heard a rumor that the party was out of control..."

- Instead of one specific event happening during the party, this is about the party itself. How destructive was the event? Did the parents find out what happened, and who caused the most damage at the event? Were the police called, were there any serious consequences for the organizers?

YEAR END PRANK

"I heard a rumor that a prank went wrong..."

- It's tradition in a lot of schools for the graduating class to pull off some sort of prank during the last week of school. This year, things went too far- did anyone get hurt? Was the prank malicious, and who was behind it?

YEARBOOK DRAMA

"I heard a rumor that there's drama with the Yearbook..."

- For a lot of students, the yearbook is a lasting legacy that they can look back on fondly. For others, it's a brutal reminder of what went wrong for them in high school. There's something controversial in this year's yearbook. What pictures got included in the yearbook? What important milestones were purposefully left out? Who was responsible for putting the book together, and what sort of school gossip did the whole ordeal cause?

PROM

"I heard a rumor that something happened on Prom Night..."

- Something controversial has happened on Prom Night. Maybe a very visible break-up, or a surprise hook-up? Did someone get pig's blood spilled on their dress? Who was the Prom King and Queen, and who was left with bitter memories of the whole experience? Did anyone spike the punch bowl?

CHEATING

"I heard a rumor that someone cheated on a test..."

- Some classes are notorious for ruining a student's grade point average. Did someone cheat, and how did they accomplish it? Did they bribe someone, or steal the answers? Did they get caught, and what was at stake if someone was to fail this test?

KICKED OFF THE TEAM

"I heard a rumor that someone got kicked off the team..."

- Someone has been cut from a sports team, and the reason why is murky at best. Who got kicked off the team, and what caused it to happen? Did they deserve to be removed from the team? Were they framed, or did they actually do something wrong?

CREDITS & THANKS

A lot of really great people helped me play-test this game and make it about 150x better than it originally was! It'd be remiss of me to not list some folks here and extend some thanks!

SHEEPY

MATT

ANDREW

MADDI

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AMELIA

NICK

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