

POISON YOU PED With Revenge

A mini-RPG of letter-writing and plot-scheming for a Writer, a Detective and 3 to 5 Victims, written by Côme Martin in August 2019.

One by one, Victims fall prey of a mysterious poison pen writer... But are they really that innocent? Will the Detective investigating the case uncover the truth in time?



HEADER

Players first agree on the game's context: a small suburban city in the 1950s, a cyberpunk megalopolis, several contemporary capitals... They also decide who will play the Writer and who will play the Detective: the rest of the players will play

the Victims.

Discuss the mode(s) of communication and the frequency of your exchanges from the start: written letters, IRC channel, emails, text or audio messages... You might also want to establish lines and veils as well as a back channel so you can talk about how the game is going.

Victims create their characters first, at least their public side. They create a dozen of NPCs in total, with whom they have strong links, keeping in mind any of these NPCs could be the Writer. Each Victim should have at least one NPC in common with another Victim.

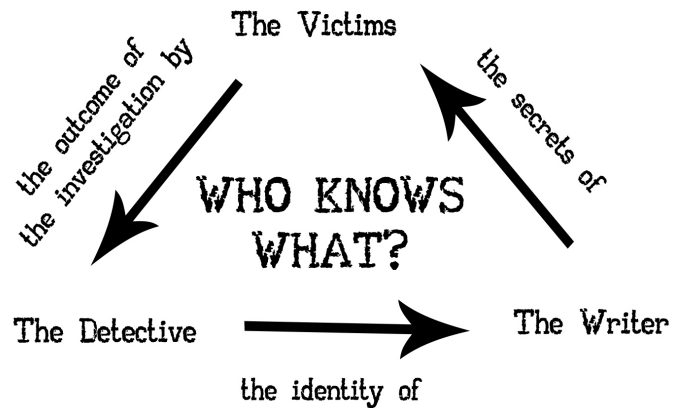
They tell everyone about these NPCs' details, and the things anyone could know about their character.

Victims can't meet or talk openly with each other, they get to decide why: somebody is watching them, they are public figures, they

don't live in the same place...

The Detective creates their character next. They choose if they are an extra Victim, a member of the community (not one of the NPCs) or someone from the outside, mandated to investigate these vengeful letters (if so, they decide with the Victims which of the latter contacted them). They shouldn't hide anything from the other players.

Finally, the Writer chooses who they will play: they hide it from the Victim but reveal their choice to the Detective. By default, they will play one of the NPCs previously created, but the Writer could actually be several people working together. However, they cannot be someone who wasn't introduced during this creation phase.



Finally, each Victim invents a dark secret about themselves, something that would destroy their life were it to become public and that was committed with another Victim: a murder, a theft, a cheating... Details are secretly discussed between the concerned players; only them, and the Writer, know about it.

Each Victim also determines their links with the other Victims: they have a deep friendship with one and are wary of another (not necessarily those with whom they share a secret).

BODY

Each role sends different messages, corresponding to different moments in the story. Every message is public and every player can read them, but there's nothing stopping you from setting up secret back channels.



Victims talk about how and why they were brought to commit the crime they are keeping secret. Their messages could take several forms: a private diary, a will, an exchange between two PCs... In any case, they are about events which took place before the game started.



Victims should deliver their story in fragments, as if it was a correspondence, so as to keep the suspense burning: they should remember nobody except another Victim and the Writer knows about their secret, and that the whole point for the other players is to discover their story progressively!

The Writer can write two types of messages: threats to the Victims, and letters to their henchmen. What they write takes place in the present time: it can be exactions from their preys, cryptic intimidations, devilish plans impeccably unfolding...

Just like the Victims, the Writer should maintain doubt about their identity, their means and their motives until the end of the game. They can also write to the Detective when they feel the noose tightening around them: it could be the time for using the Victims' secrets as a barter for not being arrested.

The Writer's player freely decides what their motivations are: get revenge from the Victims, reveal their secrets, or something more obscure.

The Detective writes their investigation report, which is also revealed by fragments. These are shown to the other players as the game unfolds, but they belong to a future time, at the end of the investigation.

In their report, the Detective describes how their investigation went, which can imply visits or surveillance of the Victims and/or NPCs (thus, potentially, of the Writer).

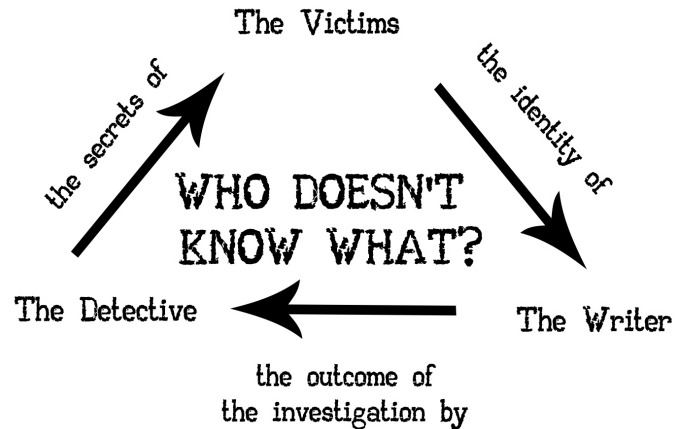
At the start of the game, the Detective tells the Victims (but not the Writer) how the story will end: with the Writer's arrest, with their death, with a dead end... They are, like the other players, invited to maintain suspense about the Writer's identity and the end of the investigation.

The Detective is free to decide their investigations are only about the Writer or that they also include the Victims' secrets.

As the game unfolds, players should pay attention to the facts that are stated in each others' messages so as not to risk contradiction. The shared story emerges from what is told in the different messages and

the different timelines, keeping in mind information can be interpreted in another way depending on the characters' points of view, or be deformed by subjective memories.

By default, avoid denying facts stated in previous messages. If need be, use a back channel to veto what other players do or say to your character.



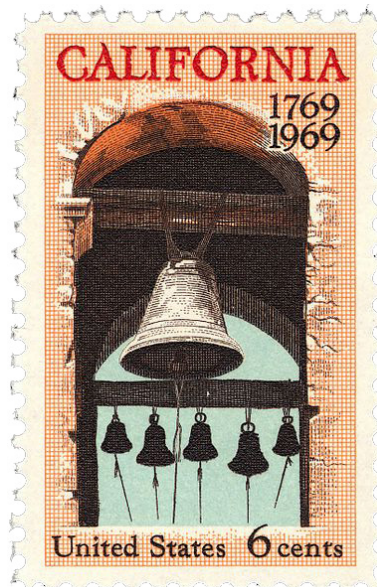
POST-SCRIPTUM

The game can end in three different ways, the first one being the best:

1. A limited exchange time had been chosen before the game started. When it is reached, the Detective writes a last fragment of their report in which they reveal whether the Writer has been arrested or remains free.

2. The Writer decides his revenge is complete and stops sending messages. The Detective then writes a last fragment of their report in which they reveal whether the Writer has been arrested or remains free.

3. The Writer decides to publish the end of their report, in which they reveal whether they arrest the Writer after unmasking them or stop their investigation because they lack proof.



Players can then describe and epilogue for each of their characters, depending on their respective situations. The epilogue can take the same form as previous messages or be looser: among other things, this could be the time for the Victims to reveal their secrets if it hasn't been already seen right through and for the Writer to reveal the reasons of their conspiracy.