

# TRANSMISSION BURST

VOLUME 2



**13 MORE STORY GAMES OF OTHER WORLDS**

# TRANSMISSION BURST

## VOLUME 2



UFO PRESS  
Games from out of this world

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# WELCOME TO TRANSMISSION BURST VOLUME 2!

It's been an interesting year since I released the first volume of microgames from the UFO Press Patreon, and I think that's reflected in these games. In this volume you have games about identity and community, mortality and memory. Give them a read, and see what other worlds they take you to!

- Mina

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Cards



2-5 Players



No GM

*Academics at a scientific conference must deal with an deadly outbreak - or at least get credit for solving it.*

### 5 LARVAE



Dice



3-5 Players



GM

*You're space bugs newly hatched on Earth, trying to blend in with society. What identity will you form?*

### 6-7 MIMIC ESCAPE



Diceless



4+ Players



GM

*The Mimic Fight League may be unethical, but it gets good ratings. Will the contestant find the key and escape? Or will the hidden mimic eat them?*

### 8 LITURGY OF THE DRAGON



Cards



2-4 Players



No GM

*The dragons are gone, but their faithful remain. As the kobold worshippers at an inner-city church, how will you deal with the challenges of modern society?*

### 9 INTERMENT



Diceless



1+ Players



No GM

*The recently-deceased must be prepared for burial. Decorate their skull as you remember their life.*

### 10 HERE, AT THE END



Tarot



2+ Players



No GM

*The residents of an old folk's home gather to share stories of their life - and goodness, what strange lives they have lead.*

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Cards



3 Players



No GM

*As a rookie, as a veteran, and as a retired elder, play through a single detective's investigation into a cold case.*

## 12 True Lives of the Cosmic Champions



Dice



1-4 Players



No GM

*The light-empowered demigods of a science-fantasy solar system deal with endless war, ennui and each other.*

## 14 GHOST SQUADRON



Dice



3-5 Players



GM

*Digital entities scanned from now-deceased people are drafted into a galactic war, waging battle in robot bodies.*

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Dice



2-4 Players



No GM

*Deal with stress, burnout and managing a shared house - along with the dark entity haunting your home.*

## 22 Gotta Get Out



Cards



2+ Players



No GM

*Life, death and time loops in a party that outstays its welcome.*

## 24 BE MY BODYGUARD



Cards



2-4 Players



No GM

*A VIP and their bodyguard have got far closer than is professional - but what do they truly want? And can they survive the conspiracy gunning for them?*

## 30 A STITCH IN TIME



String and dice



2+ Players



No GM

*Heists are a lot easier when you can rewind, bend and spindle the timestream. That is, until you start fraying it into nothingness.*



# PUBLISH OR PERISH



*The 23rd Multinational Medical Symposium has begun.  
You're here to solve the biggest problems in global healthcare.  
But an infection is spreading through the conference...*



## SETUP

Lay down 5 cards facedown in a line. This is the **Disease Track**.

Each player takes a pawn and draws a card. From high card to low, describe a feature of the conference centre, and say who your character is with a specialty according to your card:

- ♥ Pharmacology
- ♠ Treatment
- ♦ Epidemiology
- ♣ Logistics

Lowest card? You're **sick**.

**When anyone gets sick**, they put their pawn on the 1<sup>st</sup> card of the disease track.

**When your pawn moves to a face-down card**, flip it as describe that stage's symptoms. Everyone who moves to that step suffers those symptoms.



*The track at the start of the game.*

## EACH DAY:

**If you're sick**, move your pawn a step along the track. If the new step's facedown, flip it and describe its symptoms. If you hit the end of the track, you die.

Then go clockwise picking one:

**Research:** Draw a card. Describe what you do and what you learn.

**Treat:** Discard a card matching a suit on the track to move someone back a step. Unless the card's suit matches your specialty, you're **sick**. Say how you help them.

**Collaborate:** Swap hands with another player. Keep a card and swap back. If either collaborator was **sick**, both of you are.

**Publish:** Present your findings to the conference. Put a card down in the centre of the table and gain 1-prestige. If its suit matches one on the disease track, you're **sick**.

**Cure:** Secretly look at the entire track. If your hand plus **Published** cards forms a poker hand better than the track's, you find a cure; gain 5 prestige and everybody can now **Treat** without discarding. If not, discard your hand.

## AT THE WEEK'S END

The attendee with the most prestige is seen as the hero of the conference.  
The dead are mourned.



# LARVAE

A game of becoming for 2+ players.

Something alien touched Earth for a few moments. Who knows why it chose this world, or this particular spot? As it departed, it left a small clutch of eggs - membranous sacs that wiggled, split, and disgorged things. That's you. Happy birthday!

One player is the **Great Mother**, or **GM**. They're here to give you challenges to force you to grow, or opportunities to demonstrate who you are. Everyone else is a larva. You're shifting, formless, protoplasmic creatures, but that'll change.

## Playing the game

The GM will set the initial scene - where is the clutch? What can you sense about the local area? What do you first sense as a threat?

Play by describing what your larva is doing - the GM will respond by describing what results that has in their environment.

You can freely communicate with the rest of your clutch via pheromones, body language, and chirps. With exposure to other forms of language, you can learn to perform them in a few hours.

When you try to do something that's **important** to you, pick up 1 dice. If it's **dangerous**, or there are **witnesses**, pick up 1 dice for each that apply. Look at your list of traits and pick up another dice for each trait that applies, and then roll them.

Assign 1 of the dice to each of the questions below that are in play, getting results based on each die's value:

### Success

**Do you perform the important task?**

6: Yes, and you learn something. Mark a trait.

4-5: Yes.

2-3: No.

1: No, but you learn something. Mark a trait.

### Harm

**Does the danger manifest?**

4-6: No, you're alright.

2-3: You get hurt.

1: You get grievously hurt.

### Witnesses

**Do you show signs of your true nature?**

5-6: You remain secret.

3-4: Someone present clocks you as weird.

1-2: Witnesses see a clear sign that you're alien.

The GM will flow the results of your roll back into their description of the situation, and ask one of you what you do next.



## Change

**When you gain a new trait**, mark one in your current instar and fill in the blank.

**When you get hurt**, lose a trait in your current instar.

If you get **hurt** when you have no traits in your current instar, or if you're **grievously hurt**, your body begins retreating to the cocoon stage. You cannot stop this. The cocoon takes a few minutes to spin, and you emerge fully healed in about 6 hours. If you get hurt in this stage, you die.

## Traits

You start in the First Instar. When you pupate and lock an instar, combine the details into a single trait, e.g. **'I am a hive protector with a calloused surface and a hunger for meat'**. As you're in your cocoon, you can still communicate with the other larvae but no one else.

### First Instar

- My surface is... (calloused/smooth/squidgy/furry/...)
- My role in the hive is...  
(protector/nurturer/scavenger/scout/...)
- I hunger for... (warmth/sensation/meat/water/...)
- I feel safe and secure... (with others/perched high/burrowed deep/...)

Marked at least 3? When you're safe, pupate for 6 hours to lock this stage and move to the second Instar.

### Second Instar

- My name is... (free choice).
- I disguise myself as a human...  
(slowly/painfully/fleetingly/...)
- I defend myself with... (rapid escape/hidden weapons/psychic screams/subtle toxins/...)
- I seek comfort from... (animals/outcasts/artists/the masses/...)
- I feel an urge to build... (a nest/a family/a device/a reputation/...)

Marked at least 3? If you wish, pupate for a day to lock this stage and move to the third Instar.

### Third Instar

- I identify as a human... (gender/profession/cultural group/...)
- I hope to one day... (reunite with my parent/become human/find someone who accepts me/...)
- I am unhappy with my...  
(form/species/hungers/urges/fate/...)
- My key virtue is...  
(compassion/logic/loyalty/courage/justice/patience /...)

Marked at least 3? If you wish, pupate for a week to become an adult and leave this world behind. How do you leave this world? (with regret/with violence/with joy/unsuccessfully/...)



# MIMIC ESCAPE!

*The Mimic Escape League may be unethical, but they get great ratings. And they've got you. You wake up in an ordinary-looking room, and know: one of the items in this room is an evil mimic, and one of them contains the key you need to escape. And very soon, this room will fill with toxic gas.*

**Facilitator:** Prepare a number of cards equal to the number of players (not counting you) - see facing page. You'll need one **Mimic** card, one **Contestant** card, one **Object with Key** card and the remainder will be **Object** cards. Pick a room, and write it on all Objects:

*Wizard's Tower, Museum, Operating Theatre, Prison, Temple, Forest Glade,  
Thatcher's Cottage, Bank Vault.*

**Decide on a time limit** - 5 minutes is hard, 15 minutes is easy.

**Tell everyone to find a place in the room.** Give them the game intro, then start the timer.

*Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Mimic Fight! Our lucky contestant is waking up in a pitch-black room. Let's bring up the thermal imaging for the folks at home. Contestant! You have been selected to play Mimic Fight! But first, let's get to know you! What's your name?*

[Contestant answers.]

*And what do you do for a living, <name>?*

[Contestant answers.]

*Well, let's hope you can get back to that! You have <time limit> to find the key to escape. It's hidden in one of the objects in this room. But one of the items is hungry and out for blood, so be careful! Your time starts now.*

[Start the timer.]

**Every so often**, say how much time is left.

**If Contestant finds the key:** declare their victory, lauding their intellect and perception.

**If Contestant kills the mimic:** declare their victory, lauding their insight and brutality.

**If the time limit expires:** announce that the room fills with paralysing gas. Tell the Mimic to reveal themselves and devour the now-helpless contestant.

## YOU ARE THE MIMIC

**Setup:** You've just woken up in this location. It's pitch black. **Decide what shape you've taken.**

- **When the Contestant describes how they interact with you and asks a question,** answer it truthfully for your current shape.
- **While the Contestant isn't talking to you,** you may change your shape. You can't change it again until they talk to you again.
- **If the Contestant says they're opening you,** describe how you eat them. You win!
- **If the Contestant says they're attacking you,** describe how you revert to your true form as you die. They win!
- **If the Contestant attacks the object holding the key,** the object's player will describe the key breaking. Describe how you take advantage of their distraction to eat the Contestant. You win!

**If time runs out:** the chamber floods with paralytic gas. Reveal yourself and eat the contestant. **You win!**

## YOU ARE THE CONTESTANT

**Setup:** You've just woken up in this location. It's pitch black. **Decide who you are and what your day job is.**

Once the timer has started, play by approaching an object player and doing one of these:

- **Interact with them.** Say what you're doing, and ask them what you sense. Do not touch them without their explicit consent in that moment.
- **Open them.** Say how you think you can open the object. They'll say what happens. If you find the key inside them, you can escape. **You win!** If they're the mimic, they'll eat you. **They win!**
- **Break them.** Say how you're attacking them. If they were the mimic, they'll die. You win! If they held the key, the key will break and the mimic will eat you. They win!

**If time runs out:** The chamber floods with paralytic gas, and the mimic eats you. **They win!**

## YOU ARE AN OBJECT IN:

**Setup:** Decide what you are. It should have the potential for hidden chambers a key could be hidden inside, be smaller than a person, and be a normal thing to find in this location. Don't tell anyone what you are!

When the contestant comes up to you, they may do one of three things.

- **If they describe what they're doing and ask you a question:** answer their question honestly.
- **If they say they're attempting to open you and describe an attempt that might work:** describe opening to reveal an empty chamber.
- **If they say they're attacking you:** describe how you shatter into useless pieces.

**If you've been opened by the end of the game:** you win!

## YOU ARE AN OBJECT WITH THE KEY IN:

**Setup:** Decide what you are. It should have a chamber with the key hidden inside, be smaller than a person, and be a normal thing to find in this location. Don't tell anyone what you are!

When the contestant comes up to you, they may do one of three things.

- **If they describe what they're doing and ask you a question:** answer their question honestly.
- **If they say they're attempting to open you and describe an attempt that might work:** describe opening to reveal the key.
- **If they say they're attacking you:** describe how you shatter into useless pieces, and narrate the pitiful sound of a breaking key. The mimic will then eat them.

**If the player gets the key and escapes:** you win!

# LITURGY OF THE DRAGON OR AN OPHIDIAN YEAR

**T**he dragons are gone. Maybe they're dead, murdered by the dragonslayers of yore. Maybe they abandoned this world as swords and spells gave way to factories and trains. Maybe they were just giant lizards granted intelligence by superstitious villagers.

**T**he Kobolds of the Ophidian Way reject all these ideas. In their cramped churches nestled under bustling cities, they chant incantations passed down from their ancestors and hope for blessings from their draconic deities. But the dragons are gone, and the faith must adapt to the challenges of modernity.



## A CHURCH AND ITS CLERGY

Each player picks a role for their kobold in the church:

<i>Senior Priest.</i>	<i>Student Acolyte.</i>
<i>Head of Worship.</i>	<i>Treasurer.</i>
<i>Tea-kobold.</i>	<i>Trapmaster.</i>

The faith has four key tenets:

**Black** *Give comfort in secret; show strength in light.*

**Green** *Those who owe you fealty are the most precious treasure.*

**Blue** *Understand your place, so you can improve it.*

**Red** *Never doubt your ability to change the world.*

To customise your kobold's faith:

*Pick one tenet that you doubt, feel you have failed, or feel has failed you.*

*Pick one tenet you adhere to zealously above all others.*

Tell the other players your beliefs, if you think your kobold is open about their personal faith.

Finally, each player draws four cards from a poker deck.

## THE CHALLENGES OF DOCTRINE

**T**his game takes place in glimpses, each one another season in the life of the church.

Starting in **Spring**, one player takes the role of a visitor to the church instead of their kobold, and draws a card to learn further details:

You are a...	Who...
♥ Member of the kobold congregation.	A Is fleeing from the law.
♠ Recent convert from another faith.	2 Is contemplating romance.
♦ Higher-up in the faith.	3 Is seeking justice.
♣ Non-kobold magistrate, guard or merchant.	4 Wants to plunder the church.
	5 Is having a crisis of faith.
	6 Wishes a blessing.
	7 Doesn't know how to help a loved one.
	8 Wishes understanding of the dragons.
	9 Has had a vision of the dragons.
	10 Is seeking shelter from the elements.
	J Has been insulted by a devotee.
	Q Is dying or cursed.
	K Wants to donate something wondrous.

The visitor player decides if they arrive in the middle of a service, during the socialising afterwards, or in a quiet time. They describe their arrival.

Going clockwise from the visitor, each player takes it in turn to put down a card from their hand and play out a short conversation with the visitor.

**Black** cards (♠/♣) prompt conversations that are hostile, painful or distancing.

**Red** cards (♥/♦) prompt conversations that are understanding, healing or revealing.

*The church player must take care to act in line with the currently-believed tenets of the dragons.*

When all players have had a chance to interact with the visitor, the visitor says what the outcome is for the church. Consequences can be as dire as injury, impoverishment or persecution, or as wonderful as a revelation, a celebration or a revival.

The player of the highest card says how the event changes the church's faith, intensifying, reversing, compromising or modernising a tenet of their choice.

Time moves on to the next season, and the player to the previous visitor's left creates a new visitor.

## THE YEAR'S END

**A**fter four seasons, go clockwise saying how your kobold's life has changed over the course of the year. If you wish to play another year, change your role in the church and their positions on its tenets, or say they leave the church and make a new kobold. Then draw four more cards and carry on as above.

# INTERMENT

*A game about coming to terms with a loved one's death, and preparing them for the next life.*

To play, you'll need:

Craft supplies: glue, beads, paint, sharpies, crepe paper, whatever you feel like.

3 different kinds of tokens. Poker chips, glass beads, dice, coins etc all work.

A skull to decorate. This might be a paper print out, or a polystyrene/cardboard craft skull.

At least one friend.



## IN MEMORIUM

Your community is built by the hands of your ancestors - literally. In the catacombs under your settlement, their undead skulls offer guidance and wisdom, their reanimated skeletons rest until they must fight again, and their ground-down bonemeal protects against occult inference.

Each of you has a loved one who recently died. You have gathered together to celebrate their lives and guide them into the afterlife.

*Optionally: One of you can play a priest guiding the others, serving as a facilitator for this game.*

**Decide who they were to you:** parent, friend, lover, child, etc.

**Decide why they died:** Natural causes, honourable battle, underhanded murder, illness, etc.

**Decide their greatest failing:** greed, cowardice, rage, drunkenness, unreliability, indecision, etc.

**Put the tokens into distinct piles:** one for Service, one for Insight, and one for Reverence.

## BURIAL RITES

To prepare your loved ones for internment, you work through a series of your community's rites. At each rite, one mourner (or the facilitator) follows the rite's four steps:

1. They read out a prompt: a question about the deceased.
2. They name a particular kind of decoration to use. Each mourner then decorates their skull with that element in a way that evokes the prompt.
3. Each mourner tells the group their answer to the prompt, demonstrating how that's reflected in the decoration.
4. Each mourner (and the facilitator) wordlessly gives a token of their choice to another mourner:

*Service: if they think the mourner's loved one can best help the community through physical labour, or has sins to absolve.*

*Insight: if they think the mourner's loved one can help the community through providing wisdom, or still needs to explain themselves.*

*Reverence: if they think the mourner's loved one is particularly deserving of rest, or cannot serve in other ways.*

5. Pick another prompt and start again, or draw the ritual to a close and go to the conclusion.

### RITE PROMPTS:

- What was their greatest triumph?
- When did they most disappoint you?
- When did they show you the greatest kindness?
- What did they love to do in their free time?
- How did they help this community?

## CONCLUSION

Go around the table, narrating a final scene according to which of the token types you have most of:

**Service:** Your loved one's skeleton has been reassembled, ready to serve the community through menial labour or martial force. What do you say as you reunite the skull with the rest of the skeleton and bring it to life?

**Insight:** A space has been made for your loved one's skull in the catacombs, there to share their wisdom with anyone who consults them. What final question do you ask them as fire blazes to life in their eyes?

**Reverence:** Your loved one will pass over to whatever world is after this. Their bones are being ground in a sacred pestle, to disperse the ghost and provide a useful unguent to protect against spiritual assault. Do you help grind the bones down, or turn away?

# HERE, AT THE END

A game for 2 or more players. Requires a shuffled deck of Tarot cards, with the minor arcana removed.

*You've had an entertaining life. An exciting life. One that your surviving relatives don't know anything like the truth of. Now you're in a nursing home - Twilight Acres, a faded mansion with peeling wallpaper and the reek of antiseptic. And somehow you've found others like yourself, fellow strange travellers willing to swap stories. And who knows what your stories might achieve?*

## BIOGRAPHY

Decide, publicly, for your resident:

- A name.
- Who they're survived by.
- What profession they worked on.
- Why they're now in the home.

## SECRET HISTORY

Decide, secretly, for your resident:

- What dark power they served.
- What they sacrificed for them.
- What gifts they received for their sacrifice.
- Whether they still serve them; if not, why they left.

## TELLING TALES

It's early Sunday afternoon, just after lunchtime. You've all gathered round in armchairs, around an electric heater as winter rain lashes down outside. It's time to reminisce about life.

Starting with the oldest player, draw a card from the deck, and tell a tale from your life based on the card. This should be a short anecdote, but don't worry if it's meandering and aimless; remember who you're playing!

When you're done - or when others call for you to let someone else talk - pass the deck to your left, and the next person draws a card and tells their own tale.

Once everyone's had a turn, look over your Secret History. If you revealed any element of it, confirm that to the other players and narrate a sign of the world changing outside your windows (or on the home's flickering TV).

Once the deck is exhausted, or once someone has revealed every element of their secret history, the time for stories have ended. The old powers are rising, and the world shall end or be transformed. Look out of the window, and speculate about what this world will be.

## CARD PROMPTS

0. **The Fool:** A tale of naivety, luck, or a pilgrimage.
1. **The Magician:** A tale of mastery, the occult, the elements.
2. **The High Priestess:** A tale of revelation, faith, or prescience.
3. **The Empress:** A tale of parenthood, nurturing or the subconscious.
4. **The Emperor:** A tale of authority, sterility, or ego.
5. **The Hierophant:** A tale of organised religion, heaven, or wisdom.
6. **The Lovers:** A tale of choice, romance, or sacrifice.
7. **The Chariot:** A tale of focus, determination or a pivotal decision.
8. **Strength:** A tale of endurance, moderation, or cravings.
9. **The Hermit:** A tale of insight, retreat, or watchfulness.
10. **Wheel of Fortune:** A tale of luck, misfortune, or a change in station.
11. **Justice:** A tale of crime, retribution, and pardons.
12. **The Hanged Man:** A tale of sacrifice for knowledge, or an execution.
13. **Death:** A tale of endings - of relationships, vocations, or lives.
14. **Temperance:** A tale of balance, work/life balance, or unexpected mixtures.
15. **The Devil:** A tale of seduction, obsession, and domination.
16. **The Tower:** A tale of disaster, crisis, or liberation.
17. **The Star:** A tale of inspiration, hope, and grand plans.
18. **The Moon:** A tale of transformation, madness, or impossible knowledge.
19. **The Sun:** A tale of accomplishment, innocence, and reality.
20. **Judgement:** A tale of final accounting and resurrection.
21. **The World:** A tale of union, cycles, or cosmic knowledge.

# Reflections

A game about a fragmentary investigation, told through time for 3 players.

## SETUP

**Each player:** pick a stage of the investigator's life to play. Each stage may only be picked once.

### THE ROOKIE

They tell you not to get ahead of yourself, to do things by the book. But you're dedicated to this case and you're going to make your name solving it.

### THE VETERAN

They tell you to move on. That you have to let this one lie. That there are battles you can't win. But you know they're still out there, and you can still make sure justice is done.

### THE ELDER

They tell you to enjoy retirement. To take up fishing, or jigsaws. But you have cupboards full of files and notes, and maybe the answer is waiting somewhere in them.

**Together,** decide who your detective is (name, gender, appearance, etc), and where your crime took place.

Shuffle a deck of playing cards.

## UNPICKING THE CASE

You play the story of this crime out over multiple **episodes**. Each episode, each player draws cards from the deck until they have two in hand. Discard all cards currently on the table. Then follow these steps:

### 1: THE ROOKIE

**Play a card from your hand.**

State the date, and according to the card's colour (below) narrate your part in the investigation as it gets started in the style of an earnestly-written official report. Start with the first call out to the victim's residence, and move forward from there.

**Red:** Evidence is found, and you're the one who found it. What is it? How does it make you excited that an answer is close?

**Black:** A lead slips through your fingers. Did bosses pull rank? Did your errors taint a piece of evidence? Did you spook a witness? How did you suffer from this failure?

### 2: THE VETERAN

**Play a card from your hand.**

According to the card's value (below), say what part of the Rookie's narration you're revisiting. Narrate your dive into the deeper truth of the crime in the style of a hardboiled noir PI's narration.

**If your card was higher:**

You find something ignored in the Rookie's reports. Describe your followup - are you returning to the crime scene, interviewing witnesses or suspects, hunting through archives? Pick two and explain the connection between them: victim, suspect, location, police.

**If your card was lower:**

Someone visits you to warn you off this path. Describe who they were - one of your old colleagues? An influential figure? An anonymous thug? Say what they let slip in their warnings that gave you a clue to lead up on.

### 3: THE ELDER

**Play a card from your hand.**

Depending on how it aligns with the other cards from this episode, name this chapter of your memoirs and narrate a short excerpt.

**Matches neither on colour or number:**

You just can't write. Say what you do instead: garden? See family? See the doctor?

**Matches colour of one card:**

You recall the case's effects on your career. Follow up the narration from the card you matched with, and say how things changed afterwards: a new partner? A contact from an unexpected quarter?

**Matches number of one card:**

You recall the case's effects on your personal life. Follow up the narration from the card you matched with, and talk about how it led to happiness, sorrow or change outside the job.

**Matches colour or number of both cards:**

You remember a crucial detail. Based on the other two player's scenes, state with concrete certainty what one of the characters mentioned had to do with the crime - and where they are now, if you think you'd be able to investigate it.

## ENDING

Play until you're satisfied with the story.

Note that I don't mean, play until all questions are answered.

Most cold cases are never solved.

Play until you know enough about the investigator's story, perhaps.

# True Lives of the Cosmic Champions

A GM-less game for 1-4 players. You'll need at least a d4, d6, d8, d10, and d12. A diagram of the solar system and some spare paper and pencils are also helpful.

**You are Champions empowered by the Visitant: an elemental, godlike force of light and order in the heart of the solar system that saved humanity from doom in the Fall. You are immortal, triumphing against the forces of the void time and again or returning to life in a surge of solar flame.**

**And you are bored.**

**As it turns out, the terrifying forces of the Void lose their horror after you've killed them a hundred times. Your raids are an excuse to hang out with friends, to get a slightly nicer hat, to avoid wasting time in the Last City.**

**Will you find something to reignite your spark? Will you nurture these relationships, or let them rot? And when you finally encounter something so terrible it can end you for good, will you welcome it?**

## Making Your Champion

**Pick an element:** burning light, crackling plasma, silent void, rippling gravity.

**Pick a fighting style:** fists and blades, durable tanking, precise sniping, sneaky ambushes, all guns blazing, elemental bolts, empowering allies.

**Pick your proudest moment:** decoding a crucial piece of lore, recovering a planet from the Void, helping two Champions realise their love for each other, winning a speeder race, killing a terrible champion of the Void.

**Pick your greatest shame:** failing a mission and dooming a planet to the Void, leaving a Champion to die, accidentally destroying a priceless bit of pre-Collapse culture, cheating on another Champion.

**Write a starting Bond for the other Champions**, in the form "NAME is a member of my clan."

Gain **Sun** at d12 and **Void** at d4.

## Going on a raid

We see the lives of the Champions through their raids against the forces of the Void. Each time you muster, look at the **What's New** table – roll 2d6; lowest is tens, highest is units. You can shift one or both dice up or down a step (6 loops round to 1), but for each change roll your Void die; if either comes up max, increase your Void die's size.

## Setting up the mission

Go round the table, and each say one:

- The planet you're fighting on.
- The enemy faction you're fighting against. If they're new, write their name on a piece of paper. Add a detail about the danger they pose.
- Which planet is at risk if you fail.
- What cosmetic/fleeting/meagre reward you'll get if you succeed.

Go round until all are named.

You arrive at your destination. Each player takes a turn describing a feature of your destination, and a Threat the enemy faction is bringing to bear against you. Then roll **Sun** dice to see who takes the first action (see **Taking Actions**).

## Taking Actions

**On your turn**, describe the risky, daring or ingenious thing you do, and roll a d6.

**If a Champion you have a bond with is helping you**, roll another d6.

**Additionally, roll your Sun die when you...** go all out on your enemies, attempt to control a great manifestation of your element, withstand great hardship, demonstrate the truth of your feelings to another.

**Additionally, roll your Void die when you...** try to use your enemy's tools, disregard the Visitant's orders, experience great pain, grow weary, disregard someone important to you.

## Look at your highest die:

**If the highest die is a 4+** you succeed at your risk; stagger a threat, destroy a staggered threat, or revive a taken-out Champion.

**If the highest dice is a 1-4** you suffer somewhat; the other players pick one:

A staggered threat recovers.

You're taken out.

You're separated from the others.

You lose a key piece of gear.

**If Sun comes up 1** its light diminishes; drop it to a lower dice size.

**If Void comes up maximum** its hunger grows; increase it to a higher dice size.

## The Raid's End

If all threats are removed, you win! Get the reward you described. Note the defeat on the faction's card.

If every Champion is taken out, you lose! Note down on your map of the solar system what cosmetic calamity afflicts the planet that was at risk.

As a group, pick the greatest hero; they increase the size of their **Sun** dice.

When the raid is over, look at your dice. If your **Void** dice is higher than your **Sun** dice, this all seems a little pointless. Strike out a bond, your proudest moment, or greatest shame. If you have none left, give up and never return to the battlefield.

Take a break, and then go on another raid.

# What's New?

6

You received the blessing of the phoenix. Describe your new form and set **Sun** to d12.

5

One of the leaders of the Last City saved you from peril. Say who, and write a bond with them reflecting your debt.

You saved one of the leaders of the Last City from peril. Say who, and write a bond with them reflecting their debt.

4

You formed a bond with a new element. Say why this aspect of the Visitant speaks to you more than the last one.

You formed a deeper bond with your element. Say how, and how this has changed your appearance.

You connected with a piece of pre-Fall technology. Say what it does that the Visitant cannot.

3

You have a new weapon. Describe it.

You have a new hat. Describe it.

You have a new vehicle. Describe it.

You have a new pet. Describe it.

2

You developed a crush on another Champion; ask for a volunteer and rewrite your bond. Work out what drew you to them.

You formed a bitter rivalry with another Champion; ask for a volunteer and rewrite your bond. Work out how and where they beat you.

You had an ill-advised fling with another Champion; ask for a volunteer and rewrite your bond. Work out what you regret.

You were stranded on a planetoid with another Champion; ask for a volunteer and rewrite your bond. Work out how you were rescued.

You remembered one of your companions from before you were resurrected as Champions; ask for a volunteer and rewrite your bond. Work out what you were to each other.

1

You gave up part of yourself to sate the Void's hunger. Say what you wanted to forget and drop Void.

You had a vision of future darkness. Say which planet will be lost to the void's creatures if the next mission fails.

You had a vision of glorious light. Say how the system will change if the next mission succeeds.

You realised something surprising about this enemy faction's origins. Say what, and write it down on their sheet.

You realised something terrible about this enemy faction's plans. Say what, and write it down on their sheet.

You formed an alliance with a creature of the void. Say what formed a bridge between you, and write them down as a bond.

1

2

3

4

5

6

# Highest Dice

Lowest Dice

# GHOST SQUADRON

*A mashup of Ghost Ship by Jay Iles and Psi\*Run by Meguey Baker, Chris Moore and Michael Lingner. To play, you'll need at least 6 six-sided dice.*

Ghost Squadron is a game about death.

**First, the death of your body.** Your flesh and blood is gone, decaying or reduced to ash. You are a Ghost, created by an experimental brain-scanning procedure, and given life by digital necromancy after the original's death.

**Second, the death of your allies and enemies.** Your nation is at war, and what better as soldiers than a program that might think like a person but can be duplicated, backed up and spent as the top brass desires. So in bodies of rugged metal you exchange fire across desert landscapes, infiltrate civilian arcologies, and drop from orbit on enemy emplacements.

**Finally, there's the death of the self.** As you become accustomed to servos and wires instead of muscles and nerves, as your memories fill with artefacts and alterations, what will you become?

## THIS GHOST'S WAR

Most of you will play **Ghosts**; digital entities created by brain scans, no longer legally classed as people but retaining all that so-useful intelligence and skills. Go to page 2 to find out how to make your Ghost.

One of you will play **Mission Control (MC)**. It's their job to be the voice of the Program, give you your mission, and keep you informed about how the conflict around you is playing out.

The game falls into two phases: **action stations** (page 3) and **at ease** (page 4).

When you're at **action stations**, you're on a mission; when you're **at ease** you're waiting months or years as you travel from planet to planet, or languish in servers until the program wants to use you again.

Track the Program's **Approval**. It starts at 2. If you succeed at a mission, it goes up by 1; if it fails disastrously, it goes down by 1. If it hits 0, the Program is shut down and your Ghosts are put into hibernation.

NAME:

AVATAR:

MEMORIES

I remember \_\_\_\_\_

I remember \_\_\_\_\_

I remember \_\_\_\_\_

CORRUPTION



PROGRAMS:

MECH

MOBILITY:

STRUCTURE:

INTEGRATION:

BATTERY 

ARMAMENT:

MODULES:

DESCRIPTION:

# MAKING YOUR GHOST

## MEMORIES

You have three memories. Of all the events you remember from your life, these are the ones with any emotional resonance – the rest are just dry recordings of events. As you draw on them, you'll be more effective, but risk corrupting them.

Think up three memories:

- One showing your strongest connection in life (e.g. soulmate, mentor, enemy, community). Are they still alive?
- One explaining why you underwent the brain scan (e.g. research, terminal illness, fame, valuable memories). Is the original version of you still around?
- One explaining why you agreed to join the Program (e.g. protecting loved ones, avenging a grudge, seeing the world, fear of being archived). Do you regret it?

Make sure each memory includes a [action] you were performing, a person or community to act as a [contact], and a [context] it was taking place in.

## PROGRAMS

Your mind is software, and can be modded. You have one program already integrated into your mind: what is it?

- **Protective Cyberfauna** that counter-attack anyone trying to hack you.
- **Narcoalgorithms** that let you alter your simulated brain chemistry.
- **Oracle Codes** to predict an action's outcome or backtrace an event's causes.
- **Time Dilators** to make decades feel like weeks, and seconds like hours.
- **A Janus Manifold** to perfectly duplicate other's personality quirks and mannerisms.
- **Omnisight Drivers** to seamlessly integrate input from hundreds of sensors into your sensorium.

## MECH

You're digital, but the program needs you to be physical. That's why they give you mechs – robotic shells holding your Ghost core. Each drone is precisely tailored for their Ghost, as much an extension of their owner as a living person's hand. Each mech has three traits:

- **Mobility:** How agile and precise it is.
- **Structure:** How much damage it can take.
- **Integration:** How human it is – and how brain-melting it is for Ghosts to pilot.

Pick one as Weak, one as Adequate, one as Defining. Describe your mech accordingly.

Also add an Armament, and a Module:

## ARMAMENTS

- Integrated blades.
- Shoulder-mounted railgun.
- Burst rifle.
- Missile rack.
- Precision laser.
- Warsat uplink.
- Sonic burst.

## MODULE

- Rocket Thrusters to let you travel far and fast.
- Enhanced Sensors to let you sense things humans never could.
- Access Jacks to let you plug in and hijack any computer system.
- A Medical Kit advanced enough to treat wounds and patch up mechs.
- A Micro Drone to scout and explore.
- A Secondary Core to let another Ghost ride as a passenger.

# ACTION STATIONS

A mission starts with the MC describing your **insertion point** and **mission**. Then they ask the Ghosts what they're doing, and things snowball from there.

When you want to do something, assemble a pool of d6s:

- Your digital mind is fast and perceptive. Start with 1 dice.
- You're doing something important. Get +1 dice and activate ATTEMPT.
- The mission is time-limited. Get +1 dice and activate ESCALATION.
- If you draw on a memory for power, get +1 dice and activate GLITCH.
- If you throw yourself into danger, get +1 dice and activate RISK.
- If you use a program, module, or push yourself, get +1 dice and activate DRAIN.

Roll those dice and assign them to all active boxes.

---

## ATTEMPT

Do I achieve my goal?

- 4,5,6 You succeed! MC says what happens.  
1,2,3 You've made some headway, but you're not fully successful.  
Player says what another Ghost will need to do to achieve your goal.

---

## GLITCH

Is the memory glitched?

- 5,6 It remains intact.  
2,3,4 Mark a glitch.  
1 Mark enough glitches to get to your next corruption.

---

## ESCALATION

Are we in control of the situation?

- 6 You regain control. Player says how they reduce the scene's danger.  
4,5 Things stay how they are. MC describes problems on the horizon/offscreen.  
1,2,3 Things go bad. MC says how things take a turn for the worse.

---

## RISK

Does the danger strike?

- 5,6 You avoid danger. Player describes how.  
2,3,4 You mostly avoid it. MC disables a module or deals you cosmetic damage.  
1 You're hit. If you were unharmed, you're barely functional. Else, you're out.

---

## DRAIN

Do you run down your battery?

- 4,5,6 You're alright.  
1,2,3 Lose a point of Charge. If this is your last one, your mech shuts down.

## MEMORY GLITCHES

Each memory has a glitch track 16 ticks long. On the 4th, 8th and 12th ticks, the memory is corrupted. When a memory's corrupted, pick one:

- **Invert the tone:** your friends become your enemies, and vice versa.
- **Change the context:** you're doing the same thing with the same people, but somewhere completely different.
- **Change the subject:** swap the contact for someone you've recently met.
- **Change the action:** you're using different tools now.

The other players will pitch new memories to you that suit the corruption you chose; you pick one, and rewrite the memory to suit. If you hit the 16th tick the memory's completely corrupted. Erase it.

## AT EASE

At the end of each mission, you can forget a memory to replace it with a pristine memory of something that happened on the mission.

If your core wasn't returned to base at the end of the mission, you're restored from backup, but it's imperfect. Glitch a memory enough to corrupt it once, and you can't remember the mission. Also make a new mech, and describe it.

As you're waiting to be redeployed - in a server farm on a base or in a carrier ship travelling between planets - you have a lot of time on your hands. To see if you spend it well, the group puts together a pool of dice.

- Start with 1 dice per player.
- The MC will tell you to add 1 dice if the wait is longer than a few days.
- The MC will tell you to add 1 dice if the wait is longer than a few months.
- The MC will tell you to add 1 dice if the wait is longer than a few years.
- The MC will tell you to add 1 dice if the wait is longer than a few decades.

Roll the dice. Go around the table: on your turn, take a dice and assign it to one of the following boxes. As you assign a dice, describe a short vignette of your character carrying out the action and work through its consequences. When all dice are assigned, it's time for the next mission.

---

### STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR CONTACTS.

- 4,5,6 You bond with them over how your life has changed since your death. Heal 4 glitches from the linked memory.
- 1,2,3 They aren't the person you remember. Not anymore. If you wish, discard the memory. You can replace it with another at the end of the next mission.

---

### BOND WITH ANOTHER GHOST

- 4,5,6 You get closer to them. When you act to help them out, roll an extra die.
- 1,2,3 The interaction goes sour. One or both of you come away with a grudge or hurt feelings.

---

### INNOVATE

- 4,5,6 You build a new program or module. Add it to your loadout.
- 1,2,3 As above, but the MC will give your creation a cost or downside.

---

### RESEARCH THE CONFLICT

- 4,5,6 The MC will tell you how the war is going. You may ask a question about the next mission; the MC will answer honestly.
- 1,2,3 The MC will tell you how the war is going. Say someone/somewhere important to you, and the MC will say how the war's hurt them.

---

### TRY TO ESCAPE

- 5,6 You find an escape route, an ally, or an opportunity. If you have all three, you can leave - and take any other willing Ghost as you do so. If some Ghosts stay in captivity and you want to continue playing, lose 1 Approval and restore escapees from backup.
- 1,2,3,4 The Program is catching on. Lose 1 Approval.

After each mission, the MC will roll a dice. If it rolls under the number of missions you've fought, the war is over. They decide if your side won or lost. Pick one to describe your Ghost's fate:

Escaped | Put to use | Experimented on | Lost | Rebellng | Evolved

# THE LODGER

*A game of malevolent co-habitation.*

*To play you'll need 2-4 players, with 4 six-sided dice per player and tokens to use for Cash and Grime.*

*It's best if you can easily tell whose dice are whose.*

You're a small group of 20-somethings living in a sprawling city, trying to work out what you're doing with your lives. **Pick a job for your character:**

*Cashier, Data Entry, Rideshare Driver, Table Waiting, Freelance writer, Office Temp, Teaching Assistant.*

**Pick one to link you with the player to your left:**

*Lovers, Coworkers, Uni Friends, Ex-Lovers, Scene Friends, Not Friends.*

You rent a house together - an Edwardian terrace with a ratty front garden and faded wallpaper.

**What's wrong with it? Each player picks one:**

*No central heating, mouldy cupboards, draughty windows, overgrown garden, loud neighbours, squeaky floors, bad phone signal, leaking roof.*

Something alien has taken up residence there - in the attic, or a shed, or the basement, or a cupboard.

**What signs have you seen? Pick one as a group.**

*Footsteps where there shouldn't be any, hairs in the plughole that don't match anyone here, an increased dinginess, mould spreading in strange shapes, scratch marks carved into floors and walls.*

## DAY BY DAY

**Each day** you wake up and roll your pool of Effort: 4 dice that represent how much energy you can bring to bear that day. Go round the table taking it in turns to place a die on an **Action** with a cost equal to or lower than the die's value. You can put multiple dice on the same action, if you want.

**When you take Burnout**, you *lock* your lowest *unlocked* die. You don't reroll it at the start of the day, but you can still use it for actions. When you get a *locked* die back from an action, reduce its value by 1 (min 1). When you heal Burnout, *unlock* a dice. If you take Burnout and have 4, take Horror instead.

**When you take Horror**, discard a die. When you would take action but have no dice to spend, instead describe how you are gradually succumbing to the Lodger's influence.

**At the start of each day**, put 1 Grime token per player on the table. If there's more than 4 Grime tokens there at the end of the day, each resident takes 1 Burnout.

**Also write down a Corruption score**, representing the Lodger's grip on your house. It starts at 4. If it hits 0 the Lodger is banished. If it hits 8 the Lodger claims the house and none of you are seen again.

**Cash is an abstract measure** of financial stability. It can be freely traded between players, with each party's consent. Everyone starts with 1.

**Play until the Lodger is banished or victorious.**

# ACTIONS

## CHILL

**COST 1+**

You spend time doing some low-effort activity. Say what it is: watching TV, playing games, drinking, ordering takeout, something else. Spend 1 Cash to heal 1 Burnout.

## BOND WITH HOUSEMATES

**COST 2+**

**If only 1 person takes this:**

You try to do something but no-one turns up. Take 1 Burnout.

**If more than 1 person takes this:**

Say what you do together - cook a meal, watch a movie, play a game, drink, gossip, etc. Everyone involved heals 1 Burnout.

## WORK

**COST 3+**

You go to your job. Gain 1 Cash. At the end of each day, anyone with at least one die here takes 1 Burnout.

## CHORES

**COST 3+**

Say what you're doing to keep the house liveable, and reduce Grime by 1. If you have more than 1 die in this action at the end of the day, take 1 Burnout.

## FACE THE LODGER

**COST 4+**

You are drawn to the strange force contaminating your home. Roll all dice here at the end of the day and look at the lowest.

**1-2:** Whoever's dice is lowest is separated from the others and experiences something awful: they gain 1 Horror.

**3-4:** What you find is strange, but isn't a clear sign of evil.

**5-6:** The player whose dice is highest understands something about the creature. They choose: Lose 1 Horror and 1 Corruption, *or* Gain 1 Corruption and lose all Burnout.

**Each day nobody takes this action,** add 1 Corruption.

## RESEARCH THE LODGER

**COST 5+**

Who do you pay for advice or materials to oust your abhorrent tenant? Pay 1 Cash to gain 1 clue; spend it to erase an extra Corruption when you **Face the Lodger**.

# OPTIONAL: DAILY DRAMA

If you like, you can roll here at the start of each day.

**1: Rent's due.** If you can't scrape together 4 Cash per player by the end of tomorrow, everyone takes 1 Burnout.

**2: Surprise house inspection.** If Grime isn't at 0 by the end of today, everyone takes 1 Burnout.

**3: Something breaks.** The group decides what. Until someone spends 2 Cash and a **Chores** action repairing it, gain +1 Grime at the start of each day.

**4: Guest visiting.** Someone volunteers to be the host; you describe your relationship with the guest. You can't **Work** or do **Chores**, but other actions are treated as if two people did them.

**5: Lazy Sunday.** For today, **Work** and **Chores** cost 4+, **Bond With Housemates** costs 1+.

**6: It's someone's birthday!** Someone volunteers, and says if they've told everyone else. They get double effect from **Bond with Housemates** today.

## DAY BY DAY

### START OF DAY:

Roll unlocked dice.

Put 1 Grime per player on the table.

Roll Daily Drama.

### DURING THE DAY:

Go clockwise assigning a dice to action slots.

If you're out of dice thanks to horror, say how you're succumbing to the Lodger's power.

### END OF DAY

Resolve actions from low cost to high.

Return dice to players. If they're locked, lower their value by 1.

If Grime is above 4, everyone takes 1 Burnout.

If no-one **Faced the Lodger**, raise Corruption by 1.

## CHILL

**COST 1+**

You spend time doing some low-effort activity.

Say what it is: watching TV, playing games, drinking, ordering takeout, something else. Spend 1 Cash to heal 1 Burnout.

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## WORK

**COST 3+**

You go to your job. Gain 1 Cash.

At the end of each day, anyone with at least one die here takes 1 Burnout.

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## FACE THE LODGER

**COST 4+**

Roll all dice here at the end of the day and pick the lowest:

**1-2:** Whoever's dice this is gets separated from the others and experiences something awful: they gain 1 Horror.

**3-4:** What you find is strange, but isn't a clear sign of evil.

**5-6:** Whoever's dice this is learns something about the creature. They choose: Lose 1 Horror and 1 Corruption, *or* gain 1 Corruption and lose all Burnout.

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**BOND WITH HOUSEMATES****COST 2+****If only 1 person takes this:**

You try to do something but no-one turns up.

Take 1 Burnout.

**If more than 1 person takes this:**

Say what you do together: cook a meal, watch a movie, play a game, drink, gossip? Everyone involved heals 1 Burnout.

--	--	--	--	--	--

1

2

3

**CHORES****COST 3+**

Say what you're doing to keep the house liveable, and reduce Grime by 1. If you have more than 1 die in this action at the end of the day, take 1 Burnout.

--	--	--	--	--	--

4

5

**RESEARCH THE LODGER****COST 5+**Who do you pay for advice or materials to oust your abhorrent tenant? Pay 1 Cash to gain 1 clue. Spend it to erase an extra Corruption when you **Face the Lodger**.

--	--	--	--	--	--

6

7

8

# Gotta Get Out

A game about a party that outstays its welcome. To play, you'll need a few friends, a standard deck of cards, and a 60 second timer.

## Setting Up

You're at a party. There's drinks, loud music, unwise pairings, the works. *What's the occasion?*

- **A birthday.** Which PC?
- **An engagement.** Which two PCs?
- **A public holiday.** What season is it?
- **A housewarming.** Which PC's house?

Work out who you are. *Pick or draw a card for each:*

- Age:** ♥ Younger than average, ♦ Older than average,  
♣ About average, ♠ Nobody knows.
- Mood:** ♥ Excited, ♦ Overworked, ♣ Bitter, ♠ Anxious.
- Job:** ♥ Dream job, ♦ No job, ♣ Awful job, ♠ Boring job.
- Status:** ♥ Single and happy, ♦ Single and unhappy,  
♣ Solid relationship, ♠ Relationship just died.

Finally, are you:

- Forceful:** Once each Loop, you can treat ♠ as ♦.
- Yielding:** Once each Loop, you can treat ♣ as ♥.
- Sleazy:** Once each Loop, you can treat ♠ as ♣.
- Genial:** Once each Loop, you can treat ♦ as ♥.

So, here's the thing. You've been here before. You were at this party, some bad things went down, you died, and here you are again. You kinda remember what happened, but you're off-balance. What's your way out of this? *Pick a key:*

- **Guilt:** You did something bad. Can you make amends?
- **Love:** You want to be with someone, but something's in the way. Can you overcome it?
- **Prestige:** You want fame and fortune. What's stopping you?
- **Healing:** You have a wound that's sent your life off track. Can you find a new way to live?
- **Self:** You're not comfortable with yourself. Do you know what needs to change?

## Taking action

Everyone, draw a card - the highest has **Initiative**. Put the cards back and shuffle the deck.

When you have **Initiative**, start the timer. Say what you're doing. The others say how other characters respond, or describe the scene around you. If you're doing something you did in a prior loop, you can choose to get the exact same results.

When the timer runs out, you can feel the course of destiny pulling at you. Pick one: **Go with the flow**, or **Change destiny**.

**Go with the flow.**

Nothing changes. *If you've played through the events up to this point in a previous loop, the same thing happens now. Otherwise, pick a player to say what happens.*

### Change destiny.

Draw a card and put it in front of you. If this takes the number in front of you over 21, you die (see below). Else, resolve according to the card's suit; if the events hit a key of yours, flip the card facedown and don't count it towards your total.

- ♥ **You make an unexpected bond** with somebody. *Pick a player to say who, you describe what happens.*
- ♦ **You have an unexpected windfall.** *You say what sort of fortune it is, and pick a player to say how it happens.*
- ♠ **There's violence or pain.** *Pick a player to say what happens.*
- ♣ **An opportunity arises,** but it'll compromise you in some way. *Pick a player to say what it is, you say if you take it.*

Then pass initiative to the player with the lowest card total in front of them.

*Note: For the purposes of totals, aces are 1, and Jacks/Queens/Kings are 11/12/13.*

## Death and Looping

When anyone's total goes above 21, that's it for this loop. They describe how they die - from natural causes, extreme misfortune, surprising violence or something else. Go round the table describing your own deaths. Finally, return all face-up cards in front of you back to the deck and shuffle it. You return to where you were at the start of the loop, but something's different. The player who had the lowest total when they died has initiative, and draws a card:

- A If there's any effects **lingering**, they're reset. You're truly back to the beginning.
- 2-4 You have something new in your pocket.  
*Pick a player to say what it is.*
- 5-7 You get a message. *Pick a player to say what it is.*
- 8-10 The party's completely different.  
*Pick a new occasion from the starting list.*
- J Rot, mildew and mould covers the room you wake up in. Nobody who isn't looping notices it. **This lingers.**
- Q People disappear. Each player picks one, and they're gone. No normal people will know where they are, but won't be concerned by their absence. **This lingers.**
- K You have a significant medical malady. It's not necessarily impairing, but it's disconcerting. **This lingers.**

## Breaking Free

At the start of a loop, the group can try to wager everything to break each other free. *To do this*, the person with the most facedown cards in front of them flips one over. They play it in front of another player, and say how they're helping them towards their key. Use the suit to guide narration if you like. Repeat until all facedown cards have been played.

*Then, total up the cards in front of you:*

- 0-1: Time moves on without you. Did you ever even exist?
- 2-10: You don't fully escape your death. Destiny's claws leave you injured, homeless, destitute or forsaken.
- 11-20: Life goes on. You know what you need to do to get what you want, but it's going to take time and effort.
- 21+: Fate and destiny give you a shot at your heart's desire.  
Do you take it? What happens next?

# BE MY BODY GUARD



A GAME ABOUT DANGER AND DESIRE FOR 2-4 PLAYERS

## GAME SETUP

Decide on roles according to the number of players:

**2 players:** one is VIP and bodyguard's subconscious, other is Bodyguard and VIP's subconscious.

**3 players:** one is VIP, one is Bodyguard, one is both character's subconscious.

**4 players:** one is VIP, one is Bodyguard, one is VIP's subconscious and one is Bodyguard's subconscious.

### VIP

Say what you are:

- Celebrity
- CEO
- Politician
- Criminal
- Witness
- Something else

### BODYGUARD

Describe your training:

- Military
- Corporate
- Police
- Hard knocks
- Radical activism

### BODYGUARD'S SUBCONSCIOUS

Describe what brought you and the VIP closer than is professional.

- Too many drinks one night.
- Relief following a brush with death.
- An old relationship, rekindled.
- An unexpected, shared hobby.

### VIP'S SUBCONSCIOUS

Say how the Bodyguard's closeness will help your plans:

- You need an assassin.
- You're about to piss off some important people.
- You need to frame someone, and the Bodyguard will do nicely.

## EACH SUBCONSCIOUS PLAYER:

Secretly write down:

- What you want for yourself: Security, Prestige, Peace, Resolution.
- What you want from the other: Passion, Partnership, Escape, Servitude.

## THE GAME

Your story will unfold through a series of scenes.

At the beginning of each scene, one player will say what's happening based on a prompt, and the others will pick stakes - as few or as many as they like.

Each Subconscious player draws until they have 5 cards, looks through their hand, and passes three to the Conscious player. They also say, in one word, what the character's gut feeling is at this moment (e.g. 'Doubt', 'Concern', 'Joy', 'Confidence').

*Tip: If you want your conscious character to succeed, pass them red cards (♥ and ♦); if you want them to fail, pass them black cards (♠ and ♣). But if you want them to succeed or fail in a way that helps them long-term, make sure you keep cards for yourself in that same colour, and try to use your one-word communication to tell them which way you want things to go.*

Both characters take time describing what they're doing in the scene, with the subconscious players describing the actions of others and the world.

As a subconscious player, always describe things to emphasise the character's social role, and its benefits and costs.

# TESTING YOUR HEART

When a character does something whose success and failure is dramatically interesting, it's time to make a test.

## IF A CHARACTER IS ACTING AGAINST THE WORLD:

The character's conscious and subconscious players both place a card facedown in front of them. Reveal at the same time.

		Conscious player played:	
		Red (♥♦)	Black (♠♣)
Subconscious player played:	Red (♥♦)	<b>ROUSING SUCCESS</b> The character is triumphant! Conscious player describes their moment of victory. Subconscious player says how the outcome is bright for the character: a flash of insight, a sense of peace etc.	<b>TERRIBLE FAILURE</b> The test fails. The conscious player describes the moment things go wrong. The outcome is dark for the character - subconscious player says how: a betrayed bond, a hollow sense of despair, etc.
	Black (♠♣)	<b>BITTER VICTORY</b> While the conscious player describes the character's success, the subconscious player says what goes wrong: they display cruelty, a larger problem is shown, a hollow sense they didn't want this.	<b>HAPPY ACCIDENT</b> The character fails at what they were doing; conscious player says what that looks like. But subconscious player says how it works out alright: a new friend made, a flash of insight, a sense of peace, etc.

Then both players draw another card to add to their hand, and the group decides if the scene continues or comes to a close. If the scene continues, there may be more tests; if you bring it to a close, decide how the scene's stakes resolve.

## IF A CHARACTER IS ACTING OUTSIDE THEIR STRENGTHS:

Resolve it like **Acting Against the World**, but also flip the top card of the deck after facedown cards have been played. When cards are revealed, anything lower than the top card is treated as black. Aces are treated as 1.

**VIP acts outside their strengths** when they attempt physical feats, violence, spycraft and intimidation.

**Bodyguard acts outside their strengths** when they attempt intrigue, dense research, or charismatic speaking.

## IF THE CHARACTERS ARE ACTING AGAINST EACH OTHER:

Both work through the procedure above - but compare the conscious character's cards. The lower card is treated as black.

## IF THE CHARACTERS ARE WORKING TOGETHER:

The character most suited to the task takes action. Before the active character selects their card, the other character passes one of the cards in their hand to them. Once the action's resolved, the passive player draws a card from a deck instead of the active player.

# STARTING SCENE

Here's what you start with:

## THE MORNING AFTER

*Your relationship has grown beyond anything professional.*

**Bodyguard:** You woke up first. Where are the two of you? What do you do first after waking?

### Possible stakes:

- Does your fling stay secret?
- Will the VIP make their morning appointment?
- Will you feel regret - and hurt the other?

# FOLLOWING SCENES

Afterwards, go clockwise among the players picking one of these scenes:

## DANGER CLOSE

*The Bodyguard's services are called into use.*

**Bodyguard's Subconscious:** What's the first sign of danger? Who is attacking you?

### Possible stakes:

- Will the VIP or Bodyguard be injured?
- Will the attackers steal something important?
- Will your fight (or flight) attract unwanted attention?

## OPENING NEGOTIATIONS

*The VIP fights for their life in the boardroom.*

**VIP:** Who are you meeting with? What's the history between you?

### Possible stakes:

- Can the VIP gain status?
- Will the VIP be assigned a new bodyguard?
- Can you uncover hints of the conspiracy against you?

## THE SOIREE

*The VIP is called to a prestigious event.*

**VIP's Subconscious:** Who's here that you really wish weren't? How does the bodyguard look in formal wear?

### Possible stakes:

- Does the bodyguard blend in?
- Will the VIP be celebrated or shamed?
- Can the VIP make a new contact?

## UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS

*Bodyguard and VIP are apart, in the company of their peers.*

**VIP:** Where do the elites unwind? Which old rival of yours is here?

**Bodyguard:** Where do you meet your old friends? How has your violent life left marks on them?

### Possible stakes:

- Do you understand more about what you want?
- Has an old friend become a threat?

## THREAT ASSESSMENT

*The protagonists are briefed on the threats against them.*

**Bodyguard:** Who gives you your intel? Are they your superiors, your friends, your minions?

### Possible stakes:

- Do you put the clues together or chase red herrings?
- What will you need to sacrifice to be safe?
- Which allies can you call on for aid?

## A MOMENT TOGETHER

*For a short while, you're alone together.*

**Bodyguard's Subconscious:** Where do we meet? How is the status difference between us clear?

### Possible stakes:

- Are you brought closer together?
- Who reveals more than they wanted?
- Can you show vulnerability?
- Can you express what you truly want?

## CLIMAX SCENES

After 3 scenes, you can pick one of these:

### COUNTER-ATTACK

*A pre-emptive strike against the couple's foes.*

**Bodyguard:** How do you prepare for this raid? What's your target?

### Possible stakes:

- Do you bring them in?
- Do you kill them?
- Does the Bodyguard survive?
- Does the VIP survive?

### AMBUSH

*An unexpected assault puts your backs against the wall.*

**Bodyguard's Subconscious:** Where are you when they strike? What have they brought to finish you off for good?

### Possible stakes:

- Can you escape this ambush?
- Why are they this desperate?
- Does the Bodyguard survive?
- Does the VIP survive?

### CONFRONTATION

You face down the mastermind of all this.

VIP: Who is in charge? How did you manage to meet them?

### Possible stakes:

- Can you sway the mastermind?
- What's the final price you must pay?
- Does the Bodyguard survive?
- Does the VIP survive?

### ESCAPE

What you have together is worth far more than finishing this fight.

VIP's Subconscious: How are you trying to escape from all this? Who's going to stop you?

### Possible stakes:

- Can you get away cleanly?
- Will your allies and assets pay in your stead?
- Does the Bodyguard survive?
- Does the VIP survive?

## AFTERMATH

After you have played out the climax, it's time to wrap things up.

### IF YOUR CHARACTER DIED:

We look back at your final moments, and both players can finally talk about what they actually wanted from their life and from their partner. Between you, decide what your final message to your partner will be as life ebbs from you.

### IF YOUR CHARACTER IS STILL ALIVE:

It's months later. The conscious player describes their new status (health, wealth, and romance). Their subconscious player says what regrets they have about the way things played out. Conscious player says what they're going to do now.





# A STITCH IN TIME.

A GAME OF TIMELINES AND CHRONOCRIMES

You're time criminals. Not going on jaunts across the millennia - the Watchers have that tech locked down. But you can rewind and fast forward, branch and merge timelines. Whether you're assassins, burglars, spies or vandals, the job is the same: split off a branch from the main timeline, understand it thoroughly, do what needs to be done and reintegrate the branch with the main timeline with a minimum of fuss. Simple, right?

## MAKING YOUR CREW

Decide on:

**The target.** Precious artworks? A prisoner/hostage to rescue? Secret intelligence? A really exclusive party?

**Time period.** Modern day? Antiquity? Sci-fi future?

**Your chronocriminal's Skills.** Pick one at 3, one at 2, one at 1.

- **Charm:** Making friends and defusing suspicion.
- **Oracle:** Knowing what the history books say happens here.
- **Violence:** Doing harm to others.
- **Reenactment:** Extensive ability to appear a native of this point in time.
- **Jitter:** Micro-jumps in time to teleport and dodge.
- **Chronotricker:** Time shenanigans, e.g. borrowing items from your future self.
- **Cover:** A well-established role in the organisation protecting your target.
- **Pinch:** Slow down time to speed up thoughts and reactions.
- **Tinker:** Ability to mess with devices and technology.

**Finally,** name your character and describe them to the group.

You also have **3 Flow**. So long as you have any Flow you can time travel by rewinding or fast forwarding your place in the timestream. You retain all knowledge, but your body is in the place and state it was established to be at this time point.

## SETTING UP THE TIMESTREAM

You'll need some string, one coloured clip per player (paperclips, hair clips, etc), and some scissors.

Decide how long you want the string to be. About 50cm is standard, twice that for really complicated jobs. Cut that length off.

Decide which end is **Upstream** (aka the past) and which end is **Downstream** (aka the future).

If you're playing online, I'd recommend using a shared drawing platform (e.g. Google Draw). Draw a single line for your first timeline to get started.



# RUNNING THE JOB

Take it in turns to be the **Focus** - the crew member we're currently watching. While you're in focus, say what you're doing to carry out your part in the job. Describe what you do, what you say, what you feel and what you think. Move your marker up and down the time stream to suit. The other players will describe the world, speak for other characters, and judge the effectiveness of your actions. Whenever you jump to a point in time the group hasn't seen before, ask the group for ideas about where you are and pick the one you like best.

**When anyone feels like the current action would make a good cliffhanger**, they may end the turn. Move on to the next person's turn, and give them the Focus. It's good to have a set order for turns, e.g. going clockwise round a table. When it's your turn again, pick up from where and when you left off.

## THREATS AND OBSTACLES

At any point you're in focus - but particularly when it feels like something interesting should happen - another player can introduce a **threat, obstacle or opportunity**.

When you deal with a threat or obstacle, anyone can say that your solution is **dangerous, noisy or both**.

**If it's Dangerous**, the other player says how you put yourself in a bad spot.

**If it's Noisy**, the other player says how you risk alerting your target.

**If it's Both**, you pick one of the above and also the immediate situation escalates.

## ROLLING

**If the Focus has a relevant skill**, they can veto the other player's suggestion by rolling. To roll, pick up dice equal to the Skill's **rating**, roll them, and take the highest:

- **On a 6:** You describe how you turn the situation to your favour, despite the odds.
- **On a 4-5:** You describe how you turn the situation to your favour and the threat is resolved, but another player gets to say what factor **Twists** your situation.
- **On a 1-3:** You describe how the situation goes completely wrong and you are put in perilous danger, but another player gets to say what **Potential** remains for you.

### Twists

- You are **Wounded**. Or if you're already **Wounded**, you're **dead**.
- The target is **Alarmed**. Or if they're already **Alarmed**, you're **captured**.
- It takes extra time.
- You have to give up something precious.
- This timeline is **Frayed**.

### Potential

- An ally appears.
- You are no longer **Wounded**.
- The target's **Alarm** wanes.
- You find crucial information on your target.

## Consequences

Once you've rolled, tie a **knot** in the string where you currently are. The roll's results - good and bad - apply at all points downstream of the knot. Knots are fixed points in time - though you can change events upstream of a knot, fate and coincidence will guide events such that each knot's events come true, however implausible.

**When you're Wounded**, other players are encouraged to make any action that requires physical exertion **Dangerous**.

**When the target is Alarmed**, other players are encouraged to make any action where you interact with the target or their agents **Noisy**.

## FRAYING

**When the timeline is frayed**, pull apart the string from one of its ends until you hit a knot. Events still happen in the frayed region as established, but it is extremely inadvisable for travellers to visit there. Crew members in a region that's frayed automatically jump to a safe region of the timeline.

**If the timeline is frayed again from that direction**, untie that knot and fray it to the next knot. If this unties a branch from the timeline, that branch isn't frayed but travel between them is impossible until someone merges the two again.

## BRANCHING THE TIMELINE

If things have gone bad downstream, you can **branch** the timeline. Roll dice equal to your Flow and take the highest:

- **On a 6:** You tweak the branch as you fork it. As on a 4-5, but you lose a **Wound** or shut down an **Alarm**.
- **On a 4-5:** You create the branch. Tie another piece of string to the timeline where you currently are. Crew at this timepoint can perform an effort of will to switch branches. Lose a point of Flow.
- **On a 1-3:** Something goes a little wrong. Lose a point of Flow and attach the branch, but pick one:
  - **It's misaligned.** Attach the branch at the next knot up or downstream.
  - **It's porous.** Anyone in either timeline up until the next knot is haunted by *deja vu* of their counterpart's experiences.
  - **It's destructive.** The source timeline is **Frayed**.

## MERGING TIMELINES

Timelines can be merged, too. Pick a point in another branch that roughly matches when you are right now, roll dice equal to your Flow, and take the highest:

- **On a 4-6:** You merge the timelines. When acting downstream of the merge, crew members can decide which branch's events apply.
- **On a 1-3:** The merging is destructive. Using your scissors, cut away the duplicated period in the timeline you're merging with. It's now free-floating (see the rules in **Fraying** for untied branches).

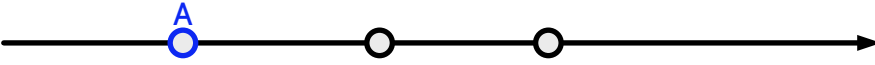


## AN EXAMPLE OF TIMECRAFT

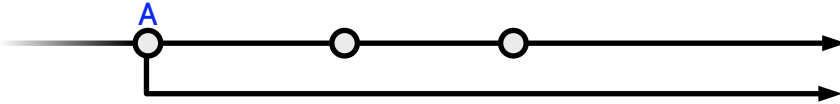
When Alice becomes the Focus, she's far downstream in a job that's already had two knots tied.



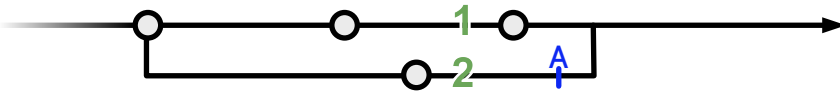
She rewinds upstream and tries something else. The others say it's dangerous, so she makes a roll, succeeds and ties a knot.



She decides she wants to branch off to avoid the later knots. She rolls and gets a 3, successfully splitting the timeline but fraying it. She decides to fray it upstream.



On a later turn she wants to merge the branch back into the main timeline. She rolls again and gets a 5: the merge is successful. Now when the crew acts downstream of the merge point, they can choose to use the knots on branch 1 or branch 2.



## ENDING THE JOB

**When the crew decides to call it a day**, select a branch to merge with the “true” timeline, discarding Frayed sections of it. All other branches fall away and dissolve in the timeless void.

**Look over the events of the branch.** Did you get your target? Will the timeline notice? What state were you all in by the end? What consequences could follow you? Were any of you lost to the void?

