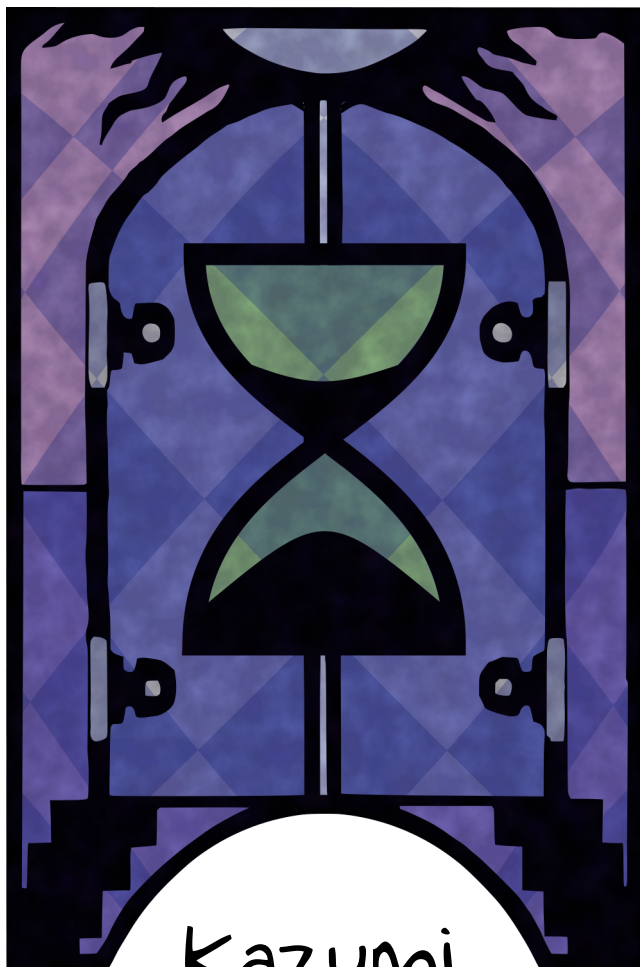


Too Late



Kazumi

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## Too Late Rules

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This is a game. Players are more important than characters. Its always okay to take space or leave game. Please be respectful of each other. Anyone may yell Cut! at any time to temporarily halt play due to a safety issue or other problem.

All characters are written to be gender-neutral. If you want, you can write pronouns and/or a gender on your badge.

Personae are specific mythological figures and thus have a default gender; however, feel free to regender them or rename your Persona to a different figure if you wish.

### Combat

Combat is based on cards. Each character has a hand of cards that represent abilities or items they have. Each card can be used once per event.

Item cards may be traded freely (but not during combat); other cards cannot. You can get new cards in various ways, such as successfully revisiting past events.

Combat proceeds in turns, starting with the PCs. On your turn, play one card to attack with and pick who you're attacking. (Cards by default have a single target, but some cards may attack more than one character.) Each defender must discard a card or cards with a total strength that meets or exceeds the attacker's card's strength. If they cannot, they're taken out; when everyone on a side is taken out, that side loses the combat.

You can pass instead of attacking if you really want to.

Each character has a Weakness to a particular element. Attacks of that element have double strength against them.

The PCs pick their turn order at start of combat. If you can't agree, play Rock Paper Scissors.

Some cards have strength \*; these can't be used to attack or block, and instead have a special effect when played.

There will be a table with decks on it for cards you gain during game. Each character has an Experience deck: take the top card when you gain an Experience. There's also a Darkness deck and a deck for each opponent you can face. Don't

look at or reorder decks.

Feel free to discuss the cards you have and their strengths and effects.

## **Social Links**

You may also have a Social Link with another character. If you have a Social Link with someone, you can sacrifice yourself to block an attack aimed at them. This takes you out. You can do this even if you couldn't block the attack normally.

During game, if you feel like you're connecting to another character, and they agree, the two of you may form a social link. Social links are always mutual. Each character can only form one social link this way during game.

Other social links may be restored via revisiting events.

If you make an attack in combat against someone you have a social link with, that breaks the link (for both of you).

## **Contingency Boxes**

Each player has a stat card (on the back of their character booklet) to track your stats and other information about your character. Your stat card also has three "contingency boxes" that have a condition like "if you win a fight". If you meet the condition in game, when it's convenient remove the sticker and read what's underneath. This may just be descriptive text describing a memory, thoughts, or feelings, or it may have some other effect on your character.

Your character is vaguely aware that their contingency box conditions could represent something significant for them, so feel free to pursue (or avoid) the conditions in game.

## **Stats**

Characters have 3 stats: Empathy, Courage, and Knowledge, which each have a numerical level. Everyone starts with one stat at 2 and two at 1. These stats are useful when visiting the past.

**Empathy** helps you understand other people and be an effective mediator.

**Courage** helps you act effectively in the face of danger.

**Knowledge** helps you figure things out and formulate plans.

Challenges when traveling through time often require certain stat values to pass. You can voluntarily fail a challenge even if you could pass it by not using your full stat value; it's not necessarily obvious to others that such a failure was intentional.

## Visiting the Past

Next to the Doorway, there is a calendar of events over the past month, one event per day. You can choose to revisit these events. Each event can only be revisited once. Multiple non-overlapping groups can use the Doorway at the same time.

When you finish an event, you'll put sticker dots on it showing what effect you had. Possible dot colors include:

**Blue** Decreased panic.

**Purple** Increased panic.

**Red** Saved multiple innocent lives.

**Pink** Saved a particular individual.

**Yellow** Decreased Shadow activity.

**Black** Increased Shadow activity.

**Green** ???

**Lime** ???

There are also signs in gamespace that an event may instruct you to reveal, representing changes to your environment in the present based on changes to the past.

Each character starts game with 3 Chances, in the form of glass tokens. These are tradable physical items. For a group to revisit an event, all members must agree what you're revisiting, and someone must spend a Chance.

Events are not independent; the past can affect the future. Some events may refer to the dots before the event; that is to say, on an event chronologically earlier in the calendar. Thus, what you do in one event can affect later events.

There are three types of events you can revisit: Disasters, Arguments, and Battles.

## Disasters

*The chaos of the Dark Hour spread to the normal world in the past month. While the Shadows have stayed hidden until recently, disasters rooted in the Shadows have become commonplace, hurting and killing your oblivious classmates and professors, causing great disruption and national panic.*

Revisiting a Disaster requires two people. There will be two role cards for the event, each with different requirements.

If the total stats of the two of you meet the calendar requirements, each choose a role card and read. When ready, roleplay the scenario together. Each of you will have a choice or challenge during the scene; choose simultaneously and remove the corresponding sticker when that happens. You may trade role cards before choosing. (Challenges may have requirements different from the initial requirements.) The result boxes will tell you what dots to add or any other effects.

If you added a dot that wasn't black or purple, you each get an Experience card and a point of Knowledge.

## Arguments

*You all aren't as close as you used to be. There've been a lot of arguments over the past month that have driven you apart from one another. The trust you had? It's mostly gone. Some of it, probably, for good reasons.*

Revisiting an Argument requires the two people who argued to open the Doorway and one other person to go back and intervene. The arguers, playing their past selves, roleplay the conflict described. Each arguer takes the corresponding role card, reminding them of the choice they couldn't agree on and how they felt about it. The intervener then joins in, attempting to resolve the argument in a way that both arguers are happy with. To succeed, the arguers must both agree on which option to choose. The intervener's result box will tell you what dots to add or other effects.

On agreement, the arguers get a Social Link with each other and a point of Empathy, and the intervener gets an Experience card. If no agreement is reached, the arguers each get a Darkness card.

## Battles

*Each of you has a Shadow, some dark parallel that appeared at some point over the last month to wreak havoc. While perhaps once you would've fought these shadows, you were too divided. Can you do better now?*

The Doorway can only fit three people, so at most three people can go back to battle a Shadow. You also need the person whose Shadow you seek to fight to open the Doorway.

That person plays the part of their Shadow, using the deck for their shadow from the table, **plus a bonus Darkness card for every black dot before this event in excess of the number of yellow dots before this event**. When playing your Shadow, play to win: do your best to make strong, effective attacks and to avoid defending wastefully.

If the party defeats the Shadow, add a yellow dot, and party members that weren't taken out each get one Experience card and gain one Courage. Otherwise, the Shadow strengthens its connection to the corresponding character: add a black dot and that character gets two Darkness cards. (The Doorway pulls the party back to the present before the Shadow can finish them off.)

Each Shadow will have one or more Item cards that the party can claim if they defeat it. If the party cannot agree on who gets each item, they must fight it out with their remaining combat cards.

## What Happens Next

*After this stolen time is up, you seven will have one last chance to face Death. This time, there'll be no second chances.*

When the hourglass runs out, the wards of this haven will shatter and you'll all be swept into the boss fight against Death. This works like a Shadow battle, except all seven of you participate.

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**Kazumi**

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You're supposed to be the chosen ones. Or you were, anyways.

It's hard to remember what it was like back then. Before this all happened. At the start of the semester. In Psych 101. Kirijo Memorial University's pretty small, so you knew the others by name. But you were just classmates, back then.

You had big ideas for college. Learn Comp Sci, make some contacts, found a startup, make it big. You didn't know then how much things would change.

Then you had this weird dream. You were in this strange room lit with eerie green light, and the others were there, too. Shigeri. Ren. Yuki. Chiaki. Masami. Ayumu. Behind a desk sat a strange man, wearing an iridescent blue mask. Philemon, he called himself. He told you that a great darkness was rising up in your town, and that only those with great inner strength could stop it. If you promised to accept the consequences of your actions, he would grant you the power you would need. Not realizing this was any more than a dream, you of course agreed. You each signed the parchment he passed you with a quill pen. As the room faded, Philemon called out one last thing. "Your connections to others will be your strength."

The next day, as you raced to class, your "dream" stuck with you. You just thought of it as an oddity. But then Shigeri was telling Ren about this crazy dream they had. That just happened to match your own. It soon became clear that all seven of you had had the exact same dream. Chiaki thought it was the coolest thing ever. But then Yuki started to freak out. And none of you knew what to really make of it.

You soon found, however, that there was some mystical hidden 13th hour at the stroke of midnight. You'd get pulled into a parallel shadow version of the campus, where strange, violent Shadows roamed the streets and hallways. You were all pretty much terrified at that point. But you found that each of you had a Persona, some sort of mythical companion or mask that gave you supernatural powers that let you fight the Shadows. Your Persona is Odysseus, who gives you

control of the element Wind. You don't really think of Odysseus as a separate entity, though. He's just another part of yourself.

As for Philemon? Maybe he gave you the Personae. Maybe they were in you all along. Regardless, you never saw him again.

The Shadows, on the other hand, were constant. At first you just fought them to protect yourselves. But then you started to enjoy it. Here, you were in control. Sure, it hurt when you got bit or scratched or blasted by acid. But the pain just added to the thrill. And in the morning, you were fine. Well, mostly.

You wondered what your adventures in the Dark Hour meant for the real world. At first they just seemed like shared dreams, aside from the scratches and scars. But when powerful Shadows started resembling your classmates, you started noticing things too uncanny to be coincidences. You beat up Erika's Shadow, and she aced the math test. You ran from Takeshi's Shadow and its piercing ice, and he vanished for weeks without telling anyone. Looking back, that's when things started to fall apart.

You had been sort of the unofficial leader up until that point. When everyone was treating this like a game, that had been fine. But now that you all saw that what you did in the Dark Hour mattered back in the "real world"... that broke down. Towards the end of November, Masami told you that this unconsidered Shadow-bashing needed to stop. You didn't take it well. And then everyone started talking at once. There was lots of yelling, lots of name calling.

Eventually, it fell out that:

- You and Shigeri thought that you needed to take out Shadows more now than ever.
- Masami and Ren wanted to study the Shadows and the Dark Hour before trying to solve more problems with violence. If what you were doing was messing with people's heads, you couldn't just galavant around doing whatever you felt like.
- Yuki and Chiaki wanted to find or build some sort of fortress. The Shadows seemed to be getting stronger and more plentiful, and they weren't eager to test what happens if you die in the Dark Hour.



- Ayumu, for their part, just seemed terrified and wasn't saying much of anything at all.

So you wished each other well, with varying levels of sarcasm. And split up. You might still run into each other during the day, but no more cohesive group bullshit at night. And that's when things really started going to hell.

At first it felt like old times, you and Shigeri fighting Shadows, kicking butt, taking names. Odysseus's grace lifted you, and you felt invincible. Unfortunately, the Shadows felt otherwise. They were stronger than ever, and with just the two of you fighting you no longer had strength in numbers. You had to run more and more. You were exhausted in the morning, could barely keep your eyes open all day, then had to make yourself fight again when the Dark Hour hit.

You were used to Shadows that looked like your classmates by now. When you saw Ren's Shadow, that was just more of the same, but you thought that attitude would go over poorly with Shigeri, so you expressed concern: what if fighting it hurt your friend? They said it didn't matter; you needed to stop the Shadows somehow, and if Ren was a true friend they'd be fighting alongside the two of you. It was a moot point, regardless: you two were no match for it.

And then, a few days later, deep in the steam tunnels, you found Shigeri's Shadow. And you saw the confidence flee from them. They said to run, and you did, but you couldn't help teasing them a bit afterwards. After that, the two of you focused mostly on the smaller Shadows. That went better, but Shigeri started getting full of himself again, making a big deal of their tactics and such nonsense. You'd just offer to seek out some bigger fry, and that'd shut them up. It was pretty frustrating, really: taking out the popcorn Shadows wasn't really accomplishing anything except stroking Shigeri's ego. Shigeri did have some sort of plan for getting better weapons from their friend Nami, which seemed to have potential, but they were cagy and nothing seemed to come of it.

A few days ago, things came to a head. You didn't see the point of holding back any longer. This was all pointless: why bother blindly bashing shadows when it wasn't even slowing down the flood? You told Shigeri it was time to try figuring out the leaders, guerrilla tactics, *anything* different. They said that if you

didn't like their style, nothing was forcing you to stay. You were fed up. You said you'd do much better alone than with an idiot like them. And so, you split.

You kept to the shadows and rooftops more, watching. And Odysseus, who never really seemed like a separate entity before, started whispering to you. Apparently he could understand what the Shadows were saying. They weren't just mindlessly swarming: they were looking for something. Apparently there was some hidden door that contained a "Mask of Death" that carried ultimate power, and various powerful Shadows were sending their minions out to search for it. Now *that* was very interesting. Your former companions were foolish and short-sighted, and they'd abandoned you. The Dark Hour had fallen to shadow, and the chaos had spread to the normal world. You were going to need power to survive. And maybe when you had it, you'd see what the people around you deserve.

But looking for this Mask wasn't easy, even overhearing clues from the oblivious Shadows. Not with all the Shadows swarming around, stupid as they are. And you were at a distinct disadvantage. Regardless, you didn't find it in time. You were trying to make your way up the bell tower when it happened. A loud ringing. A noise like thunder. A rift like a jagged crack in the sky, eldritch green light streaming through. Out stepped a Shadow like you'd never seen: stories tall, spiked and twisted, with a dark mask. Death's Mask. As he surveyed the campus around him, dark fog streamed out of the rift after him, covering you in darkness.

And then, out of the blackness, you saw a figure. She was a bit human-shaped, a bit shadowy, a bit indistinct. Her face was hidden behind a white mask like a ghost. And she reached her hand out to you.

"It's too late for you." Her voice sounded familiar, but you couldn't place it. "But I can give you a second chance. A chance to fix things. If you work together, you can change the course this world's stuck on. But I fear some of you have been lost to darkness. And I can only hold Death back so long."

Uncertain, desperate, you took her hand. And then you were in a dim room, with an hourglass counting down and a beckoning translucent doorway. And the others.

She told you this Doorway can let you revisit the past, let you fix what went wrong. She's linked it to events you can visit safely, without fear of paradox. But outside you can see endless hordes of Shadows, with a Shadow taller than the bell tower looming above them. Death. You may have been granted respite, but he's coming. She says her wards will keep him out until the hourglass runs out, but after that you're on your own, with whatever you've managed to regain.

But that's just what you want. Now that you've caught your bearings, you realize that all's not lost. Sure, the power you seek is in the hands of a Shadow. Sure, the world you know is falling apart. But now you have a chance to recover your strength. You have allies you can manipulate to help you. A Shadow with power is still a Shadow. It can be defeated. And if you play this right, you'll be the one who gets the mask when it does. If you put on that mask, you'll have ultimate power under your control. And then you'll be able to pick up the pieces and make them into whatever you want.

## **Goals**

- Build your power by gaining Experience and/or Shadow cards.
- Keep your companions from figuring out that you have priorities beyond stopping the Shadows.
- Put yourself into a position to claim and wear Death's Mask after you get your companions to defeat Death's Shadow for you.
- Stay alive.
- If you don't manage to get the Mask, try to keep it from getting destroyed, so you can try to get your hands on it later.

## **Contacts**

- **Shigeri**: Bold and enthusiastic, a good obedient lieutenant. Until recently, when they got all timid and touchy.
- **Masami**: Little Discount Vulcan over here. Always arguing with your plans and proposing something "logically better".
- **Ren**: Cynical and disparaging of everyone's nonsense. A fun person to have around.
- **Yuki**: A little goody two-shoes who always wanted everyone to like them and

to act like you were all best friends.

- **Chiaki:** Depressing little quiet kid, all emo whenever anything got tough.
- **Ayumu:** Even worse, always terrified of every little setback.

### **Character Info**

- |                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| - <b>Persona:</b> Odysseus | - <b>Courage:</b> 2   |
| - <b>Element:</b> Wind     | - <b>Empathy:</b> 1   |
| - <b>Weakness:</b> Earth   | - <b>Knowledge:</b> 1 |

### **Items and Abilities**

- Garudyne (combat card)
- Daring Leap (combat card)
- Garu (combat card)