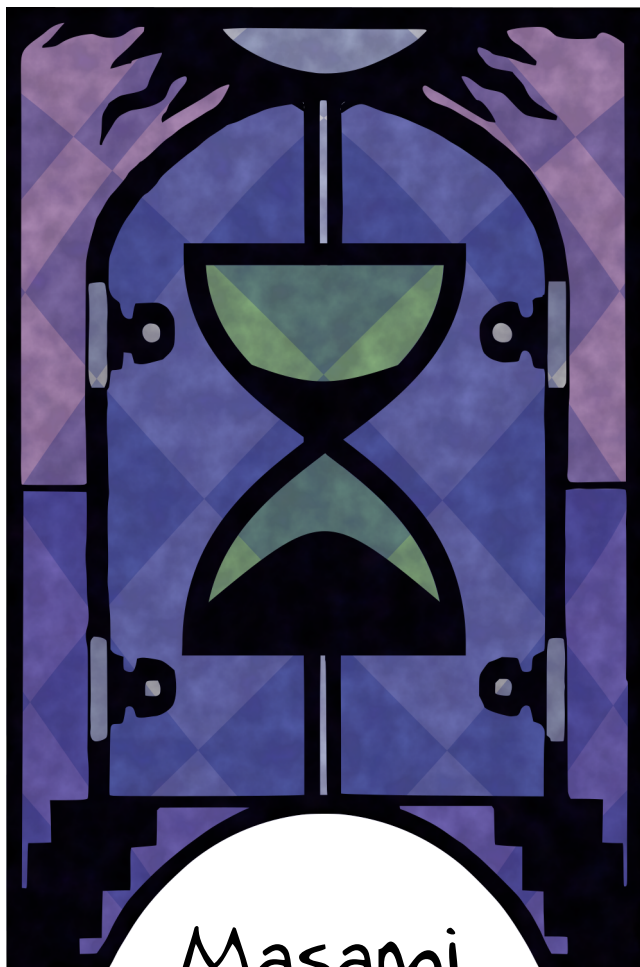


Too Late



Too Late Rules

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.

Masami

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're a sophomore in Biology, taking some psych as a prereq for a neuroscience course. You've long been fascinated with how the human brain works. We have such great capacity for logical analysis and rational thinking, and yet we spend so much time blinded by emotions into making poor choices.

And there's another reason, too. Your younger brother died back in High School. Hit-and-run, some stranger that never got caught. One day, he was happy and growing and would always be a part of your life. Then he was gone, with no way to ever talk to him again. You felt like there should've been some way to record his brain, to save a backup, so that people wouldn't just be gone like that. So that's what made you interested in neuroscience. And that's why you were taking Psych 101, even though it seemed a bit fluffy.

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. Kazumi. 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 Daedalus, who gives you control of the element Metal. You don't really think of Daedalus 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.

Kazumi 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, You told Kazumi that this unconsidered Shadow-bashing needed to stop. They 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:

- Kazumi and Shigeri thought that you needed to take out Shadows more now than ever.
- You 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.

You and Ren studied the Shadows and their movements. At first, you found some interesting patterns. The Shadow density was growing slowly but exponentially. New Shadows seemed to cluster in two locations: around the biology building and the bell tower. Minor Shadows would cluster around larger, more powerful Shadows.

Ren roped in his dayside stats major friend, Omi,¹ who helped you figure out that, when these secondary clusters got particularly large, that's when weird things would happen in the normal world. Now that you thought about it, there'd been leakage even before the big falling-out, strange transient phenomena. But major stuff was happening now: people getting sick, acting crazy, getting hurt in freak accidents. And it had clear correlation to the shadow clustering patterns.

You both agreed you needed to do something. But what, exactly, was another question. You weren't strong enough to take on these gangs of Shadows yourselves. You wanted to trace where the Shadows were coming from, see if you could stop them at the source. Ren wanted to study these clusters more, try to fig-

¹She vanished at some point; you heard she got mixed up somehow with those druggies that OD'd.

ure out how stuff was crossing over. Needless to say, tensions were high. You said that if they wanted to keep staring at the same thing over and over, be your guest. They said that if you thought you could stem the tide of Shadows by putting your thumb in a dike, you were obviously beyond help. After some further yelling, you two split up as well.

In the week and a half since then, it became clear this was a mistake. The Shadows were terrifying enough when you had someone watching your back, and now it was even worse. You'd gotten good at keeping hidden, but now you jumped at every noise. And now you had only Daedalus to talk to... and he's not the best conversationalist.

Still, you couldn't really go back, so you guessed you had to see what you could find. You went to the bell tower, trying to see where the swell of Shadows was coming from without getting caught. Daedalus helped you climb, but it was slow going. You paused on a ledge, looking in at the slow stream of shadows that seemed to be coming from somewhere higher up.

And that's when you heard a voice in your head. You thought it was Daedalus at first. But this voice was stranger, more distant, more haunting. "I need your help. You're my only hope."

"The scientists in your world, they cracked the Barrier. They let the Shadows loose. I can't control them any more. Too much longer, and Barrier will fall, and they'll pull your world into Chaos."

"I can restore order, make things right. But I'm still chained here. I need your help. I need to find my Mask, first. Then the Doorway. But first, the Mask." Somehow, you felt you could trust him, and Daedalus agreed.

The Mask proved to be surprisingly easy to find. It was hidden in the tower, behind some sort of translucent iridescent doorway that seemed to hide it from the milling Shadows. But not from you. You grabbed it and managed to get it to the top of the tower, where a small crack in reality waited.

"Pass it to me," the voice whispered in your head. And you did.

Then there was a great hollow ringing from the tower's bell, a crack like

thunder, a blinding green light, then pitch 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. Her mask was not the Mask you'd found. And when she spoke, it was not the voice you expected.

"It's too late for you." There was something alien in her voice, something wrong. "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. Wearing your Mask. 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.

And as you stand there shaking, trying to get your bearings, the old voice rises in your head again. "I apologize, friend. I needed to abandon you when my sister came, or she wouldn't have taken you in. She's too weak to face me herself, so she thinks she can get you and your friends to do her dirty work. She thinks she can trick your friends into stopping me. Ensure that they do not, help me reach the Doorway, and we can fix this together. And then I can give you whatever you ask in thanks." Still thinking of death, your thoughts immediately go to your brother. "Yes, even that. Now go. Be subtle and deft. I have faith in you. And if all else fails, save my Mask."

And now the seconds start to tick away. Not long until this is all over, in one way or another.

Goals

- You're worried the others keep their gut hatred of all Shadows; keep your connection with the Masked Shadow to yourself unless you think you can make someone understand.
- Try to build your power above the others' with Experience and/or Shadow cards to stay in control of the situation.
- Ensure that your companions don't stop the Masked Shadow from getting to the Doorway. While the Masked Shadow might look ominous, you've learned not to judge based on appearances. And if this could get your brother back, anything's worth it.
- If he *is* defeated, keep the Mask safe as best you can.

Contacts

- **Kazumi:** Too much into trusting their "gut" and leaping in head-first, rather than taking a minute to think things through and be sensible.
- **Shigeri:** Bold and enthusiastic. Less touchy about things than Kazumi, but still way too impatient and impulsive.
- **Ren:** The most sensible of the bunch, even if they can be a bit caustic. Of course, that didn't stop you two from your little senseless blow-up.
- **Yuki:** Always friendly and chipper, gratingly cheerful. You guess they mean well, but they're like someone out of a kid's show.
- **Chiaki:** Weird little quiet kid, all emo whenever anything got tough.
- **Ayumu:** Another quiet kid, always wanting to run away and hide.

Character Info

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|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| - Persona: Daedalus | - Courage: 1 |
| - Element: Metal | - Empathy: 1 |
| - Weakness: Wind | - Knowledge: 2 |

Items and Abilities

- Adames (combat card)
- Clever Strike (combat card)
- Skewer (combat card)