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# Old Friends



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# Ole Peder Gjæver Jason Morningstar



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*Back in the '90's you were a team. You hunted ghosts together. You used an ancient technique that reliably bridged two worlds, and you put a lot of souls to rest.*

*Like any team you were a mess of individual flaws, contradictions and rivalry, but it worked.*

*It worked until Sara died.*

*It happened at a haunted school, back in '96. Seemed like a routine investigation at first; turned into your worst job ever.*

*And that was it. You were done. Disbanded after the criminal investigation. The authorities filed the death away as "natural causes". You all knew better, but kept your mouths shut. What choice did you have?*

*And now here you are: The same school, the same classroom. Renovated, painted, bright. The past has brought you back together. Together for that one last job.*

## Hey, Facilitator!

Comments, suggestions and advice for you will appear in this column.

## Breaking Down the Time

Preparation for play should take about 20-30 minutes total, including all setup and a short workshop. 2-3 hours of play. Budget 30 minutes or more for a post-game debrief.

## Facts

By Ole Peder Giæver and Jason Morningstar

Genre: Ghost story

Duration: 4 hours.

Number of participants (min-max): 4-5 (including "facilitator" who also plays)

Number of organizers: 1

Workload: Light

Possible Locations: Classroom, conference room, private home.

Costume: Everyday clothes.

Props: : A half mask, printout of the cards, character name tags.

Playing style: Realistic but improvisatory.

Keywords: Ghosts, possession, guilt, death, friendship, trust.

## Using This Document

At least one of you should read this document once or twice before the game. You don't have to know everything by heart, but you should have a grasp of the method. You will explain the basic concepts to the other players, help them set up characters, workshop relationships, explain the rules and facilitate the flashback scene. From then on, you'll be a regular player in the game, with a character of your own.

# How the Game Works

## What You Will Be Doing

During *Old Friends*, play will be punctuated with a series of ghostly possessions. Possession is represented by putting on a half mask. The game begins with a ritual and ends with another, after all the characters have been possessed at least once.

Your character will be defined by a handful of cards you choose randomly from a series of categories. There are two types of cards—Open cards, which contain information you can and should share with the group, and secret cards, which contain information that is for you alone until compelled to reveal it.

Open cards define who your character is now. You will receive one card for the part you played on the old team (Team Role), what you have been doing in the 20 years since Sara disappeared (Backstory), your relationship with other characters who are here now (Problem with the Living), your relationship to Sara (Problem with the Dead).

Secret cards define how you will interact with the ghost during play (Possession and Keywords). By keeping these to yourself, you'll be able to surprise your fellow players, and they, you.



## So Many Cards!

In practice each player will have six cards to think about, four of which are used to form a character and history during the pre-game workshop.

In play, the only cards anyone needs to pay attention to are their secret cards—the Possession they've chosen, and the Keyword they've received.

Players can keep their open cards in their pocket or on the off-game table for reference, but it is unlikely they'll be referred to in play.

## Card Distribution

*Old Friends* uses 44 cards:

- Warmup Possession (2)
- Warmup Keyword (2)
- Team Role (6)
- Backstory (6)
- Problem with the Living (6)
- Problem with the Dead (6)
- Possession (10)
- Extra Possession (1)
- Keyword (5)

Some of these cards won't be used—there are more open cards than players, and each player will choose one of two Possession cards, discarding the other. The Extra Possession is optional and may also end up not being used.

# Preparing for Play

## Arrange the Space

*Old Friends* will work well in a variety of settings. Make sure yours is quiet, private, and has access to a nearby toilet. It need not be comfortable. Designate an off-game table for character cards (especially if a player lacks pockets), the four warmup cards, the common Possession card, a relationship map for the characters, the rules and principles and the scenario one-page walkthrough. These can be freely checked during play. Don't make a big deal out of another player using it, use it when necessary. Specifically off-game items may be stored under the table.

## Hand Out Cards

Hand out open cards first. Open cards contain public information. These are distributed randomly. Each player should have one card of each type.

- Your Team Role is the function you used to have on the team.
- Your Backstory is what you have been doing for the past 20 years, since the group fell apart.
- Your Problem With the Living defines a relationship between the characters. Each card gives some instructions for your character's specific issue, and you talk it over and make up details in a group session.
- Your Problem With the Dead defines your character's relationship with the ghost. The instructions on this card are shared with the other players, and you can use your various Problems With the Dead as basis for creating a little backstory together. Don't spend much time on it, though.

Next, randomly hand out secret cards. Secret cards are not shared, although their information is likely to emerge in play. When distributing, make sure that no players have any cards with the same symbol. This is to avoid someone getting a possession card that is supposed to trigger the keyword they received.

- Your Possession card gives you inspiration and instructions for use of the mask—when you become possessed by a ghost. Choose one of the two and discard the other—it won't come into play. Choose the one that sounds most fun and interesting to you. Either is fine. The Possession card instructions are kept secret from the other players before the game, and gradually revealed in play when you become possessed.
- Your Keyword card gives you instruction for what to do if you hear a particular, easily recognizable phrase uttered by the ghost. Their exact meaning is unimportant. Think of it as glossolalia. There are only five of these cards. The nature of the instruction is first revealed to the other players during the game, when the ghost says your keyword. It's unlikely that all keywords will be triggered during the game. If you forget, it's OK—but try to listen for the keyword on your card whenever a ghost speaks.

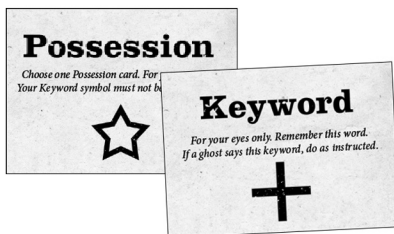
## Unused Cards

For most card types there will be extra, unused cards. Leave these cards on the table, with open cards face up. It's OK to change cards, either with unused ones or with other players, but don't spend too much time on this.

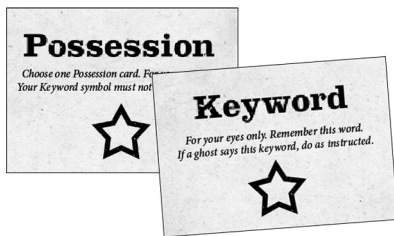
## Old Friends, in Order

1. Character setup and card distribution.
2. Warm-up and flashback.
3. Opening ritual, which always starts the game.
4. Continuous play with no scene breaks. Roleplaying in real time, interspersed with Possessions on player initiative. Breaks as needed, individually or for the group.
5. Extra Possession card can be used if needed.
6. Closing ritual to end the game if needed. It may end in a satisfying way organically.

### Secret cards: Like this!



### ...not like this!



## Multiple Possessions

The default assumption of the game is one possession per player, but if it feels right a player can do another possession using the extra Possession card later in the game. If your game demands further possessions, feel free to be creative, but understand that the intention is one per player.



### **Problems with the Dead**

Note that this procedure doesn't address your Problem With the Dead cards, which are common knowledge but shouldn't be illuminated or expanded upon much before the game begins.

### **Decide On Names and Ages**

Choose names for your characters and put on nametags (like the cards, these are an off-game element; a reminder to the players only).

Choose an age for your character. When you disbanded in 1996, your character was between 25 and 35 years old, so choose within this range and add 20 years to arrive at the present-day character's current age.

## **Conducting the Workshop**

### **Make Introductions and Connections**

Share your open cards, and chat a bit about what kind of a character they reveal. This especially goes for the "Problems with the Living" and "Problems with the Dead" cards, but you can expand a bit on all cards this way (just don't lose track of time. Save most of this setting/backstory improv for play proper).

You can take some notes and draw a relationship map as the characters are presented. Leave these notes on the off-game table you designate later on.

Take turns stating your character's name and say a little bit about their original function on the team.

### **Establish Relationships**

Taking turns, go around the circle of players three times.

- The first time, pick up your Problem with the Living cards and read the text.
- The second time, establish relationships to other characters. For instance, one of the cards reads:

"Decide which other living member of the team recruited you back in 1993. You have never forgiven them for drawing you into the ghost nightmare. Ask them what lie they told you."

If this is your card, choose a character who was your "recruiter" and ask them about the lie. That way, you collaboratively flesh out the characters, their relationships and their backstory. Try to ensure everyone has at least one such relationship.

- The third time, talk briefly about the content of your Backstory cards. How has your character been? What has your character been doing for the past 20 years? You can add detail and give each other input, but try to keep the process relatively brief.

## Explain the Principles and Rules

After character setup, take some time to explain the principles, rules and procedure of the game.

### Principle: Listen

Give others a chance to speak. Hear what they say. See how you can build or act on the information they impart to the story.

### Principle: Accept, and Add

If something is stated or established in the fiction, it's probably true. Characters and ghosts may lie, and you may forget details. But try to stay with what has been said. Add your own details as they come to you. Don't try too hard. Say the first thing you think of. Reincorporate elements that have come up previously.

### Principle: Decline, but Offer

It's perfectly fine for your character to refuse a suggestion, but try to come up with a counteroffer. Don't block or stall the game. If you get stuck in discussion-paralysis; act. Put on the mask when no one is looking. Make up something, like an accusation. Do something stupid. Just pause. And breathe.

### Principle: Reincorporate

Before you add a new element, consider: what has already been established? Can I re-introduce it into play? Will it create contrast, or shed new light this time around?

### Principle: Stay Fluid

Be willing to discard your plan, or even better; don't plan for a certain outcome. Pick up on the creative "balls" others throw out for you to play with. Go along with ideas. This is key to having fun in this game.

### Principle: Let the Story Emerge

There are no true secrets here. There isn't a prewritten plot to discover. This story will emerge during play, and you will see the totality in the end. Relax. Give your character and the ghosts time to play their hand, say their piece. Watch what the others do. Listen.

## Rules

Explain these rules to all players after setting up the characters.

### Rule: Realtime, Illusion

Everything that happens and is said in the room happens in the fiction. The game runs realtime, without scene structure or act breaks. It's designed for the Fastaval 2016 convention, which took place at a school. Games there usually run in classrooms, so that's also the setting of the scenario. If you run it elsewhere, you can adapt the setting of the game to fit the location you have available. The room is the room in the game. It looks more or less exactly the same. Ideally play in a place and time free of external noise and distraction, ideally at night.



### Facilitation Advice

Don't read the principles out loud. Instead give a casual walk-through. You can use the warm-up to give some friendly instructions and reminders. If you're unfamiliar with facilitating this kind of game, don't sweat it. Stick with "listen", "accept, and add", and you'll be fine.

### One More Principle: Be Obvious

You don't have to be funny or smart. Let the words come to you at their own pace. Lead by example.

## Safety

Playtests have shown the game can get intense. By default, it runs without “safety mechanisms” except the open door policy. Our assumption is that the players are adults who share a basic, normal trust in their fellow players. If the group or local play culture prefers safewords or safety mechanisms like cut/brake, x-card or similar, feel free to agree before play and use them.



## Ending the Game

Some factors to consider:

- Have all players had the chance to play at least one possession phase?
- Has there been some kind of resolution with Sara? Is she ready to depart? Has she been destroyed?
- Have some other personal conflicts been resolved or brought to light?
- Time is also a factor; total game time for *Old Friends* at Fastaval is 4 hours. You could decide to finish sooner.

Ultimately, whatever choice you make will be the right one.

## Rule: Possession, Mask and Keywords

When you were ghost hunters, you used a special mask to contact the entities. The mask is the gateway that opens your minds to the spirit, lets them enter. Possession is a fatiguing, often dangerous, process. That’s part of the reason why you depend on each other in the group, and why one person can usually only become possessed once in a single seance. Twice is possible, but pushing your limits.

The possession and keyword cards are open to player interpretation, and serve as inspiration for them during the possession. These cards provide atmospheric but cryptic play guidance about tone, theme and motivation. Some cards also include a word—fairly unusual but not necessarily bizarre—that you must utter during possession. These words are keywords for another player. Not all keywords will be triggered during the game, and all may not be remembered. Try to listen for your keyword, though.

Remember that if you feel you need a second possession, there is one extra possession card that you can use. This card is best used at the very end of the game. Beyond this, you are on your own.

Every player also has a keyword card that, if a possessed character utters it, triggers some dramatic and specific action, response, or sequence of events.

For example: A possession card instructs the player acting as the ghost of Sara, the deceased team member, to utter the phrase *oruboros* at some point during possession. Another player will have the following keyword instruction:

“When you hear the phrase *oruboros*, you are reminded of a specific event involving Sara. You will start relating this event, and keep talking no matter what else is occurring in the room, like a madman talking to himself.”

If someone forgets their keyword, it’s OK. Don’t worry you “missed a cue”, just keep playing and improvising new content in the story.

## Rule: Turn Away To Don the Mask

Never allow anyone to witness you putting the mask on your face. Before you put on the mask, turn your back. When it is in place and you are breathing through the ghost’s emotions, turn and face the other players.

## Rule: Obey the Ghost

When a ghost gives a direct instruction or command, your character has to obey. You can try to twist and interpret its instructions like some fairy tale djinn. But in the end, you have to obey the ghost. Trust as a player that this is for the best!

## Rule: “Take Off the Mask”

To end a possession phase (when someone is wearing the mask and acting as a ghost), a character lightly touches the shoulder of the possessed character and utters the command “take off the mask.” The ghost-player must instantly obey this instruction, ending their possession phase.

## Rule: Leaving the Classroom, Going Off-Game and Taking Breaks

A character, and thus the player, can leave and return to the room at will. Make up a fictional reason if you plan on leaving and returning.

### Sort Of Rule: Documentation

Some of the character roles may point toward in-game documentation. This is encouraged, provided every player gives consent to be recorded. As long as everyone is good with it, take photos, video, and record audio of your session. If anyone doesn't want the game to be documented, or seems in the least uncomfortable in their assent, enjoy your game without it.



When you're outside the classroom, you're off-game. It's Easter, the school in the fiction is closed. You could explain yourself to the other characters, you can ask for someone to go outside with you for a moment. It could be for a breather, the restroom, anything. It could be used for dramatic effect or whatever reason you need. Try to return to the room, and the game, as soon as you can. You can also do collective in-game breaks if you prefer. We suggest one 10 minute off-game break between warm-up and game start. Because the game runs in realtime, coming and going is perfectly natural and should be encouraged - if you need a break, take one. This will give the other players a great opportunity to gossip and speculate behind your back.

### Rule: Ending the Game

Choose two of the players to be responsible for initiating ending the game. This could happen by the group performing a Closing ritual that mirrors the Opening ritual you will all soon experience, or by some other means that seem natural given the story that has emerged. Ask two players to be alert for a good time to bring the game to its conclusion. Knowing when to end the game requires some sense of timing, and knowing when it "feels right".

### Warm-up/Flashback

To get acquainted with the mask and rules, you'll play a brief flashback scene together. The warmup introduces mask work and lets players try out the game's rules, using warmup-specific keyword cards and possession cards. This is the only time you'll use these four cards, after the warmup all cards not assigned to players are put away to avoid confusion.

This is a guided exercise that sees a subset of the ghost-hunting team dealing with a spirit. It is facilitated by you, the reader of this text. Your character is not present. Sara, who is alive at the time of the flashback/warm-up, is also not present. The year is 1995 in the flashback sequence.

Guide the others through the procedure of the game:

- The opening ritual
- Becoming possessed
- Dealing with keywords
- The rules ("Obey the Ghost", "Take off the mask")

Cut the scene when you feel the players have got the hang of it.

Show the warm-up possession and keyword cards to everyone, to let them know how they work. Two players get example keyword cards, two players get possession cards. Ask for a volunteer to act out the first possession.

Instruct them: You're in a small bedroom at the house of a family in a suburb. They have been haunted by strange sounds and nightmares since they moved in last year. You are trying to help them.

Say something along these lines when a player puts on the mask for the first time. You don't have to interrupt if they seem to be getting into it:

"When you read the Possession card, focus on one of the first adjectives. As you put the mask on, allow that emotion to come out of your breath. Whenever you feel less connected during possession, come back to the breath."



## Observe

Also use the warm-up to give some soft directions regarding playstyle. If you notice someone is blocking or seem unsure, offer friendly tips and cues based on the principles and rules outlined on page 5. Maybe even offer direct suggestions during the scenes.

## Facilitating the Flashbacks

During the flashback sequence, it's OK for the facilitator to remind the players of the Obey the Ghost rule and "Take off the Mask". Don't be afraid to edit scenes tightly—this is demonstration, not performance.



## Quiet Downtime

Some of the most interesting play will occur between possessions.

"Turn away and slowly place the mask on your face, close your eyes while doing so. Focus on your breath. Breathe the emotion. Keep your hands over the eyes of the mask. Breathe the emotion. Remove your hands. Then flick your eyes open, and the ghost is there."

"Notice how through the eyes of the mask, the world is different."

"Follow your impulses. Let the ghost speak with your mouth."

Try out a couple of possessions with different players. Hopefully this will help you run the game together without such instructions.

If it doesn't happen too abruptly for you to react, tell the players when they unmask:

"Notice how you feel different when you take it off, as if you leave what was speaking there. Your character also, when they remove the mask, may remember the experience but more as an observer than anything."

Hopefully everyone will be energized and excited about what is to come at this point. Begin the game when you are ready.

# Playing the Game

## The Opening Ritual

When everyone is ready to begin, conduct a small ritual to "Open the Room".

- Put the mask on the floor in a central location.
- Stand in a circle around the mask and hold hands.
- Close your eyes and start humming. Listen to the others. Try to match their rhythm and sound. Add small variations. Continue for a while. Decide individually when to stop, until all are silent. Then say: "Make your presence known".
- This ritual readies the mask and the group to interact with the spirits.

## Between Possessions

It can be good to let the mask rest a bit between possessions, while keeping the game going. Maybe three minutes, maybe fifteen. You have to give the energy some time to gather.

## Ending the game

Either or both of the players you've tasked with ending the game will know when it is right to do so. Conduct the Closing ritual or follow the story that you've created wherever it leads.

## The Closing Ritual

- Repeat the Opening Ritual, saying "You may depart" instead of "Make your presence known".
- This cleanses the room, and closes the mask—for now.

# Facilitator Cheat Sheet

## Before Everyone Arrives

1. Acquire a suitable mask and secure a time and place to play. Invite four friends!
2. Print out, cut out and sort the cards. Color coding them is helpful.
2. Arrange the space and welcome your fellow players.

## When Everyone Is Ready To Play

1. Set up characters and distribute cards. Remember there are not player secrets, only character secrets.
2. Facilitate the warm-up and flashback.
3. As a group, perform the opening ritual, which always starts the game.
4. Play is continuous with no scene breaks. Roleplay in real time, interspersed with Possessions on player initiative. Take breaks as needed, individually or for the group. Leaving the space allows the others to gossip about you and should be encouraged.
5. The Extra Possession card can be used if needed.
6. The closing ritual can end the game if needed. It may end in a satisfying way organically.

## Principles

- Listen. Accept, and Add. Decline, but Offer. Reincorporate. Stay Fluid. Let the Story Emerge. Be Obvious.

## Rules

- Realtime, Illusion. Stay in character. Turn Away To Don the Mask . Obey the Ghost. “Take Off the Mask”. Take breaks.

## Ritual

- Put the mask on the floor in a central location.
- Stand in a circle around the mask and hold hands.
- Close your eyes and start humming. Listen to the others. Try to match their rhythm and sound. Add small variations. Continue for a while. Decide individually when to stop, until all are silent.

## For the Opening...

Then say: “Make your presence known”.

This ritual readies the mask and the group to interact with the spirits.

## For the Closing...

Then say: “You may depart”.

This cleanses the room, and closes the mask—for now.

# Thanks

...to Alex Fradera and Kristin Firth for valuable input on mask use and Lizzie Stark and Emily Care Boss for sound advice above and beyond.

...Simon James Pettitt for the school photos.

...to the Fastaval 2016 jury, and all our Fastaval players for their energy, support and feedback.

...to our playtesters: Jenny Sara Jacobsen, Ane Marie Anderson, Katrin Førde, Frida Sofie Jansen, Erlend Eidsem Hansen, Håken Lid, Matthijs Holter, Magnus Jakobsson, Gaute Våje, Olav Borge Bondal, Anders Gredal Berner, Francesco Rugerfred Sedda, Busnita Alexandru, Praveen Namasivayam and Leonhard Pickny, Johannes Oppermann, Ciorstaidh-Muirreann Macleod, Daniel Adams, David Krommer, Christian Hansen, Helmut Schmutzer, Barbara Ng, Hakan Seyalioglu and Lena Kikko Henriksen.

## Leader

You were the leader, the group's face and driving force.

You were **bold, energetic, and arrogant.**

## Enforcer

You were the enforcer. Sometimes the group operated in legal grey zones. You were the one to keep everyone safe and in line.

You were **pragmatic, tough, and thoughtless.**

## Scholar

You were the scholar of ancient ghost lore, and a researcher of new haunts.

You were **thoughtful, strict, and cruel when necessary.**

Print these cards double sided. In printer settings, choose double sided and "flip on short edge".

## Caretaker

You were the caretaker, group's center of gravity—a mother hen, attending to both financial matters and bruised egos.

You were **caring, trusting, and foolish.**

## Con Artist

You were the con-artist, and never truly believed in "the cause". But you could sell bones in a graveyard, and often saved the group through various deals.

You were **cunning, quick, and selfish.**

## Die-Hard

You were the die-hard. The paranormal was an intimate part of your life. You brought experience and a sense of purpose to the group.

You were **ambitious, open, and eccentric.**

# Team Role

*What did you do,  
back in the ghost hunting days?*

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*What did you do,  
back in the ghost hunting days?*

## Hunter

You kept on hunting ghosts, for real, quietly putting disturbed spirits to rest.

You are **poor** and **a little crazy**.

## Celebrity

You went on to moderate fame, not really “hunting ghosts” per se, not doing good work, but writing tell-all ghost books and appearing on television.

You are **self-satisfied** and **wealthy**.

## Careerist

You got out entirely and started fresh in a new, boring, lucrative line of work. An accountant, a tax advisor, that sort of thing.

You have **much to lose**.

## Disaster

You went in and out of institutions for years. You’re still just barely hanging on, abusing anything that will stave off the voices, the things you see.

You are **broke, unemployed** and **desperate**.

## Professor

You got out of ghost hunting and went on to be an academic, and have been fighting a terminal disease for years, perhaps more spiritually attuned with death because of it.

You are **interested in where this will lead**, with **nothing to lose**.

## Parent

Your family is your joy, you care for them so deeply. You are always afraid.

The knowledge that the other side could reach out for your children any given night **scares you witless**.

# Backstory

*What have you done over the last 20 years,  
after everything fell apart?*

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## Love

You had an intense romantic relationship with another living member of the team. Maybe you were married. You loved each other fiercely for a while.

- ▶ Decide who it was.
- ▶ Ask them what the last straw was, and why it ended so badly.

## Hate

There was another living team member you had a visceral hatred for, and it was mutual.

- ▶ Decide who it was.
- ▶ Ask them why they loathed you, and what was the real root cause of the weirdly strong enmity.

## Trust

You never trusted a person on the team; someone who is still alive. You felt they were always ready to go too far and tamper with things you were not meant to tamper with.

- ▶ Decide who it was.
- ▶ Ask them to tell you about the thing they did that scared you into quitting.

## Deception

Decide which other living member of the team recruited you back in 1993. You have never forgiven them for drawing you into the nightmare it turned out to be.

- ▶ Decide who it was.
- ▶ Ask them what lie they told you.

## Sacrifice

You took the fall for another living member of the team. The scapegoat stain has never washed off.

- ▶ Decide who it was.
- ▶ Ask them what it was about and why it had to be you.

## Friendship

You were best friends with another living member of the team.

- ▶ Decide who it was.
- ▶ Ask them how they betrayed you when it all fell apart.



**Problem  
With the  
Living**

*Relationships are ... complicated.*

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*Relationships are ... complicated.*

**Love  
(or Shame)**

You and Sara were lovers, and nobody could know.

- ▶ You need to let go.

**Loyalty  
(or Regret)**

You knew the terrible thing Sara had done, and never told a soul.

- ▶ Sara needs to be redeemed, somehow. Maybe you do, too.

**Failure  
(or Murder)**

You were complicit in Sara's death. No one knows but the two of you ... and one of you is dead.

- ▶ Remember this is a secret from the *characters*, but not the *players*.
- ▶ You need to be forgiven.

**Haunting  
(or Madness)**

You have seen Sara after her death, several times, against your will. She is tormenting you, for reasons you only suspect.

- ▶ You must give her what she wants, or take it away forever.

**Hatred  
(or Fear)**

You hated Sara almost as much as you feared her. You still do, on both counts.

- ▶ You must confront her.

**Coincidence  
(or Secrecy)**

Choose another player and ask to see their card.

Whatever it says equally applies to you.

Perhaps you share a secret, or perhaps you carry your identical burdens privately.

- ▶ Collaborate and decide.

**Problem  
With the  
Dead**

*Relationships are ... complicated.*

**Problem  
With the  
Dead**

*Relationships are ... complicated.*

**Problem  
With the  
Dead**

*Relationships are ... complicated.*

**Problem  
With the  
Dead**

*Relationships are ... complicated.*

**Problem  
With the  
Dead**

*Relationships are ... complicated.*

**Problem  
With the  
Dead**

*Relationships are ... complicated.*

## YOU ARE SARA

Let regret and sympathy guide you. They were your friends. Now you remember.

- ▶ Approach one of the others. *Beg them to recount how you harmed them.* Then ask if they can ever forgive.
- ▶ Use the word **SERAC** while you are possessed.

## YOU ARE SARA

Let remembrance and resentment guide you. You recognize them all. They were your... friends? They left you here.

Tell them about the cold place you're in. Build gradually.

- ▶ Choose a player and confront them. Ask them: *"What do you remember about me?"*
- ▶ Use the word **ACRASIA** while you are possessed.

## YOU ARE SARA

Let pity and horror guide you. What have they done to themselves? What did they do to you? They are here to save you but you would save them if you could. They need you but time is a tangled knot where you are.

- ▶ Go up to one of them. Whisper by their ear and *tell them the circumstances of their death.*
- ▶ Use the word **BISSUS** while you are possessed.

## YOU ARE SARA

Let sorrow and menace guide you. These people can destroy what you have left of yourself forever. Don't allow that to happen!

- ▶ If you don't yet know who your former lover was, *demand that they reveal themselves.*
- ▶ Use the word **SERAC** while you are possessed.

## YOU ARE NOT SARA

Let spite and cunning guide you. These creatures are vile. You see their true faces, and turn them against each other. They seek another, perhaps you can pretend to be that one.

- ▶ Point to the person who seems most calm and confident. *Command them to tell the truth.*
- ▶ Use the word **ACRASIA** while you are possessed.

## YOU ARE SARA

Let terror and flight guide you. This cannot be real. You're gone. You're all here. Alternate between calm, collected pacing and anguished screams.

- ▶ Go up to one of them. Whisper by their ear which emotion they feel, *"You feel..."*
- ▶ Use the word **BISSUS** while you are possessed.

# Possession

*Choose one Possession card. For your eyes only.  
Your Keyword symbol must not be the one below:*



# Possession

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# Possession

*Choose one Possession card. For your eyes only.  
Your Keyword symbol must not be the one below:*



## YOU ARE NOT SARA

Let confusion and tension guide you. You have no name. You are a fox in a live trap. If they open the cage door, lash out and flee!

- ▶ Focus your attention on two players you choose. Set them against one another! If they lower their guard, escape!
- ▶ Use the word **HAPAX** while you are possessed.

## YOU ARE NOT SARA

Let apprehension and disquiet guide you. Someone has stirred you from slumber. This is your space, now. Interrogate them. Do not reveal your name.

- ▶ Demonstrate your power by giving minor commands.
- ▶ Use the word **YISEL** while you are possessed.

## YOU ARE SARA

Let relief and mercy guide you. You did good. You did bad. You lived. It's time.

- ▶ Sit down on the floor, fatigued. Smile. Cry. Ask their forgiveness and help to let go.

## YOU ARE SARA

Let incredulity and abandonment guide you. You recognize one of these faces. They were there at the end.

- ▶ Tell them, briefly, what you remember of the last day. Choose a player and confront them. *Ask them what they remember about you.*
- ▶ Use the word **HAPAX** while you are possessed.

## YOU ARE SARA

Let clarity and absolution guide you. You are lucid. Remember how it all came to pass. This needs to end.

- ▶ Tell them what you did on the final day. Point to two players by turn. *Demand that they explain their actions.*
- ▶ Use the word **YISEL** while you are possessed.

# Possession (Anyone)

*If a player needs a second possession, use this card.*

# Possession

*Choose one Possession card. For your eyes only.  
Your Keyword symbol must not be the one below:*



# Possession

*Choose one Possession card. For your eyes only.  
Your Keyword symbol must not be the one below:*



# Possession

*Choose one Possession card. For your eyes only.  
Your Keyword symbol must not be the one below:*



# Possession

*Choose one Possession card. For your eyes only.  
Your Keyword symbol must not be the one below:*



When you hear the Keyword...

## **HAPAX**

...it is time for revelation.

- ▶ Reveal your inner darkness by word, gesture or deed.

When you hear the Keyword...

## **BISSUS**

...drop into a convulsive fit.

- ▶ Emerge whenever it feels right, shaken and exhausted.

When you hear the Keyword...

## **YISEL**

...you are overcome with a vision of the exact moment the group was disbanded. It lasts only a minute but seems longer to you.

- ▶ Describe what you saw to the others.

When you hear the Keyword...

## **SERAC**

...slowly approach the greatest monster you see in the room.

- ▶ What do you do?

When you hear the Keyword...

## **ACRASIA**

...you are suddenly possessed.

- ▶ Go tap the shoulder of the currently possessed character, say “take off the mask”. Put the mask on and continue as the ghost your Possession card instructs you to play.



**Keyword**

*For your eyes only. Remember this word.  
If a ghost says this keyword, do as instructed.*



**Keyword**

*For your eyes only. Remember this word.  
If a ghost says this keyword, do as instructed.*



**Keyword**

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**Keyword**

*For your eyes only. Remember this word.  
If a ghost says this keyword, do as instructed.*



**Keyword**

*For your eyes only. Remember this word.  
If a ghost says this keyword, do as instructed.*



When you hear the Keyword...

## **DORMITION**

...you receive a vision of the dead child's past.

- ▶ Tell the others what you saw.
- ▶ What do you do?

## **YOU ARE A GHOST**

Let sorrow and anxiety guide you.

You are abandoned. Your parents are gone. Where are they?

- ▶ You have the power to command these people, if you dare.
- ▶ Use the word **DORMITION** while you are possessed.

## **THE RITUAL**

When everyone is ready to begin, conduct a small ritual to "Open the Room". Put the mask on the floor in a central location. Stand in a circle around the mask and hold hands. Close your eyes and start humming. Listen to the others. Try to match their rhythm and sound. Add small variations. Continue for a while. Decide individually when to stop, until all are silent.

For Opening, then say: "Make your presence known". This ritual readies the mask and the group to interact with the spirits.

For Closing, then say: "You may depart". This cleanses the room, and closes the mask - for now.

When you hear the Keyword...

## **ABACULUS**

...you find the strength to bring comfort.

- ▶ What do you do?

## **YOU ARE A GHOST**

Let playfulness and guile guide you.

You are a child. You don't know these people. This is your room.

- ▶ Choose one of them. Tell them to play with you.
- ▶ Use the word **ABACULUS** while you are possessed.

## **PRINCIPLES**

Listen

Accept, and add

Decline, but offer

Reincorporate

Stay fluid

Let the story emerge

## **RULES**

Realtime, Illusion

Stay in character

Obey the Ghost

"Take Off the Mask"

Take breaks

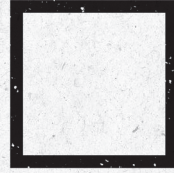
# Principles & Rules

*Just a handy cheat sheet.*

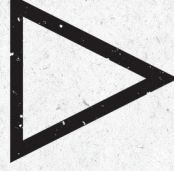
# Ritual Guidance

*Just a handy cheat sheet.*

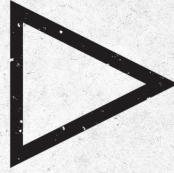
## Warmup: Possession



## Warmup: Possession



## Warmup: Keyword



## Warmup: Keyword

