

Untitled Jeepform

by Ben Lehman

PLAYERS:

Players are divided into four groups. You will want at least four players.

One player is the Witness, also known as the Game Master. They keep an eye on the time, signal for players to wrap up or continue scenes, and pass judgement over the proceedings. They do not portray a character, although in some parts they may play extra parts.

One player is the solider. They are the focal player of the game. The character that they play is a veteran of one or more wars, who is now senile and dying. Solider player: figure out your name, your rank, and what wars you fought in. The soldier wants peace and absolution before death, whatever that means to him.

The other players are divided between ghosts and family. Err on the side of more ghosts.

Family are friends and family of the soldier, come to visit him one last time before he dies. Family players, talk amongst yourselves about your relations to the solider, but don't come to a consensus (as in: not all of you have to be the same relation.) Resist the urge to over-problematize: it can be fun to have a messed up family drama, but that isn't necessarily the focus of the game.

Every family character is looking for closure in their relationship with the soldier, whatever that means to them.

Ghosts are the ghosts of people that the soldier has killed, in war or otherwise. Ghost players, talk amongst yourselves about the circumstances of your deaths, but don't come to a consensus (as in: not all of you need to have died the same way.) Maybe you should resist overproblematizing: consider that you might simply be an enemy soldier. But you might also be a civilian, or even someone unrelated to the war.

Every ghost character is looking for closure in the heart of the soldier, whatever that means to them.

The game is divided between two types of scenes: framing and recollection.

FAMILY'S POWER: RECOLLECTIONS

The framing scenes are set in the hospital, retirement home, or old home where the soldier is dying. One or more family characters will arrive and start talking with the soldier. This may be the last time they see him before he dies, and they (either the soldier or the family member) will want to talk about the past.

Once you start talking about the past, you have entered a recollection scene. The soldier and family member describe the event, setting up the basics of the scene, and cast the other players in the role of others who are there, with the following guidelines: Family members play themselves, then if they are not there play others, then the witness plays someone, and only then cast ghosts as roles.

As the soldier recalls things, the recollection may jump in time, place, or content. As a player, follow along.

Play out the scene. When it has naturally come to a close, the witness will let you know. When the recollection is over, return to the framing, and then either the family member in question departs or start a new recollection.

GHOST'S POWER: WHISPERS AND ECHOES

Ghosts are only visible and audible to the soldier. If you want, they can whisper in his ear, but honestly it's fine if they speak out loud, just remember that they are only visible to him. Ghosts cannot start recollections on their own, but they can tell the soldier his own perceptions and thoughts (during framing but most especially recollection), and in doing so can alter the substance of a recollection (the soldier may start recalling a different scene as well, or elements of the war or the ghost's deaths may enter into the recollection.) If the soldier recalls a ghost's person, they play that character in the recollection scene.

SOLDIER'S POWER: CONCENTRATION

The soldier player may often have many people talking to him at once. He may, at his option, point to one of them. When the soldier does this, everyone must be quiet and listen to that one player. This is called "concentration."

WITNESS'S POWER: ENDING AND JUDGEMENT

The witness tells the other players when a scene has ended. This isn't quite the same as choosing to end the scene: as the witness, wait until the scene has reached its natural end.

Any time after three recollections have occurred and when at most three separate framing scenes have occurred, the witness can call the game to an end. When the witness does this, she passes judgement on the game, saying whether or not the soldier received absolution and peace, and whether the ghosts and the family members received closure. She may take advice from the players, but her word on this is final.