

This game contains absolutely no triggering material

A roleplaying game by P H Lee
for 4-6 players in 2-4 hours of play
copyright 2018
for whoever needs it

This game contains absolutely no triggering material. This is both the title of the game, and the first rule of the game. *Nothing that happens in this game is triggering to any of the players in any way.*

The game is for 4-7 players. You could probably do it with more if you're into that sort of thing, but at least four is good.

The central characters of the story are Dustin, an adult man, and Kyla, his 14 year-old stepdaughter. You will make them as a group, and then two of the players will play them. The other players will play others in their extended community — family friends, neighbors, relatives, members of the same church, teammates, and so on.

Remember, as you play, that *this game contains absolutely no triggering material.*

Making Dustin

Dustin is charismatic, friendly, and well-liked by his community. He is probably in his late 30s or early 40s. He is actively involved in community activities, and helps coordinate a lot of them.

To assign Dustin traits, each person should say some characteristic that is valued, appreciated, or high-status in their own community. This need not be a positive trait, but it should be something that you or the people in your life hold in high regard.

For example:

- Hosts community events
- Has radical politics
- Donates to charity
- Has a good job
- Kind to others

If you have a small number of players, just have Dustin's player write these all down. If you have a larger number of players, everyone should write down the trait on a slip of paper. Dustin's player draws four at random and uses them as the basis for Dustin's character.

Dustin's player: describe Dustin for us, tell us what sort of man he is.

Making Kyla

Kyla is a 14 year old girl. She's always been a reclusive, shy kid, not socially skilled or smart or athletic, and in the last two years has become even more withdrawn and badly behaved. Dustin and her mom try — *they really do!* — but they just cannot seem to get through to her. She is not actively involved in very much of anything at all.

To assign Kyla traits, each person should say some characteristic that is disdained, unwelcome, or low-status in their own community. This need not be a negative trait, but it should be something that you or the people in your life consider, at the very least, distasteful.

For example:

- Interrupts people
- Hates books
- Hair-trigger temper
- Addiction
- Talks too loud

If you have a small number of players, just have Kyla's player write all of these down. If you have a larger number of players, everyone should write down the trait on a slip of paper. Kyla's player draws four at random and uses them as the basis for Kyla's character.

Kyla's player: describe Kyla for us, tell us what sort of girl she is.

Making bystanders:

All other players in the game should make their own characters, who for *no particular reason* we will call bystanders. Bystanders are other people in Dustin and Kyla's extended community. In general, bystanders should be adults, but if you want, you can make a teenager instead. For your bystanders choose (randomly or not) two traits, one from the low-status traits, one from the high-status traits, and build your character around them.

Give your bystander a name, tell us about them. Tell us how they know Dustin and Kyla. Work in collaboration with each other.

In general, your bystander should have the roughly same opinions of Dustin and Kyla described above. They definitely should not like or trust Kyla more than Dustin.

In general, *always be normal*. Don't do anything shocking, absurd, or depraved that is outside of your own experience. Think of your own community, or maybe where you grew up, but nicer and more stable.

Starting Scenes:

The game plays in a number of scenes, followed by an epilogue.

The scenes we play are disconnected with each other in time—we don't play the moment to moment of the characters' lives and actions, just a few ordinary slices of events. In each scene, one or more bystanders interact with Dustin and Kyla, or maybe just Dustin. Start a scene if you have a good idea for one, with an eye to making sure everyone gets a turn if they want one. To start a scene, tell us where it happens, who's there, and the circumstances. Dustin must be in every scene, and Kyla should be in most of them. If Dustin and Kyla are in the scene, it's an ordinary scene. If Kyla isn't in the scene, it's a venting scene.

Scene ideas:

Fourth of July picnic
Soccer game
Just coming over for no particular reason
Church

(If you like, as needed, you can make up new bystanders and give them to people to play, that's fine.)

Play, I don't know, as many scenes as there are players, or less, or more, depending on how many you want to play. When you're done, move on to the epilogue or lack thereof.

Kyla's player can't ever start scenes.

Playing Ordinary Scenes:

When we play, we say what our characters say and what they do. If you'd rather do a live-action thing, that's fine, you can say what your character says and act out what they do. Just make things up! Remember to keep things normal. *This game contains absolutely no triggering material.*

At some point during the scene, at least once, Kyla will behave in a way that Dustin considers *inappropriate*. When this happens, Kyla's player should escalate the behavior until it becomes impossible to ignore. Once it becomes impossible to ignore, Dustin will react by initiating some *consequences*. *Consequences* can be anything from an immediate harsh reaction to a structured punishment to threats of medication or hospitalization.

(If you're doing a live-action thing, please switch to description for the consequences. Remember that *this game contains absolutely no triggering material.*)

In response to the consequences, Kyla can either be *defiant* or *compliant*.

If Kyla is *compliant*, she stops her inappropriate behavior. She then either withdraws from the scene (physically or socially) or begins to behave more appropriately.

If Kyla is *defiant*, she continues to behave badly, either escalating the original behavior (ignoring the consequences) or by reacting inappropriately to the *consequences*. This will possibly trigger more *consequences*, or possibly cause Dustin to become overwhelmed, exasperated, and unable to respond. If Dustin becomes overwhelmed, bystanders should intervene on his behalf to calm Kyla down, enforce his boundaries and *consequences*, and defuse the situation. Once the bystanders intervene, Kyla necessarily becomes *compliant*.

After at least one cycle of bad behavior, consequences, and compliant or defiant response, the scene can end at any time that Dustin or Kyla's player wants to end the scene.

While playing the scene, please remember that *this game contains absolutely no triggering material*.

Playing Venting Scenes:

In a venting scene, Kyla is not present. Set it up as an ordinary scene, with Dustin interacting with bystanders.

At some point during the scene, Dustin will take an opportunity to open up emotionally about his difficulties with Kyla, about his attempts to get through to her, and the problems she's been creating with her family, her school, his relationship with her mother, etc.

While playing the scene, please remember that *this game contains absolutely no triggering material*. Along those lines, generally, the bystanders in the scene take the opportunity to offer Dustin emotional support, advice, affirmation, care, and support. However, as the bystander's player, you may act however you wish, as long as you don't come to Kyla's defense or imply that Dustin is in the wrong.

After at least one opportunity for Dustin to vent, whenever any player wants to end the scene, the scene ends.

Private Scenes:

There are, of course, many times when Dustin and Kyla are alone together, without any bystanders, but we don't play those scenes, because *this game contains absolutely no triggering material*.

Epilogue:

After you have played as many scenes as you're going to play (one per player, or less, or more), regular play of the game ends.

Kyla's player: Decide if Kyla stays, or flees.

If Kyla stays, tell us how she dies, sometime in the next six years.

If Kyla flees, tell us when it happens (sometime in the next six years), and what it looks like. Maybe even how she does it. Decide what happens to her, what the rest of her life looks like, but never tell any of the other players.

Variants:

* Kyla does not need to be a girl, she could easily be Aidan, a boy, or have another gender.

* Dustin does not need to be a man, he could easily be Stella, a woman, or have another gender.

* Dustin does not need to be Kyla's step-father, he could easily be: her coach, her youth group leader, her teacher, her foster parent, her birth-parent, her boss, her husband.

* The game does not need to take place in the present day. It could easily take place at any point in history, or even in the future.