# \*\*Week 1: The Consent Pause\*\*

\*When the Game Gets Too Real\*

🎲 \*\*Rolling for Transformation - Week 1\*\*

I was GMing a session where one of my players was exploring their character's abandonment issues. The roleplay was getting intense - beautiful, but intense. I watched their breathing change, saw their hands start to shake.

Without thinking, I called for a break. "Let's pause here for a moment."

Later, they pulled me aside: "Thank you. I didn't realize how deep I was getting until you gave me that lifeline."

\*\*That pause saved them from drowning in their own character's pain.\*\*

Here's what I've learned about consent in gaming - it's not just about the big obvious stuff. It's about the moment when fiction becomes too close to truth. When your character's pain starts pulling at your own wounds. When the game stops feeling safe.

🛡️ \*\*The anatomy of a consent pause:\*\*

- \*\*Recognition\*\*: "This is hitting different than I expected"

- \*\*Permission\*\*: "I'm allowed to stop this"

- \*\*Action\*\*: "I need a pause" (no explanation required)

- \*\*Reset\*\*: Deciding how to move forward when you're ready

\*\*The magic isn't in never getting triggered. The magic is in learning to pause without shame.\*\*

I used to think emotional safety meant avoiding anything that might upset me. Now I know it means building the skills to navigate intensity when it arises. Gaming taught me that. Every pause I've taken at the table has made me better at pausing in real life.

Your character's trauma doesn't have to become your trauma. Your healing doesn't have to happen on someone else's timeline. And your gaming table should be a place where "I need a pause" is met with respect, not pressure to explain.

\*\*To my GMs reading this\*\*: When someone asks for a pause, the only correct response is "absolutely." Not "why?" Not "can you push through?" Just support.

\*\*To my players\*\*: You have permission to pause. You have permission to change your mind about what you're comfortable with. You have permission to grow at your own pace.

The bravest thing you can do at the table isn't staying in character through the pain. It's knowing when to break character for your own wellbeing.

🎭 \*\*Question for reflection\*\*: What would change at your table if everyone felt truly safe to pause?

\*Next week: The Villain's Mirror - What your BBEG says about your inner demons\*

#chaoscrewflint #shadowwork #ttrpg #consent #healing