

The monsters' time is over.  
But some still remain  
Along with the alien fruit  
That fills pockets,  
And their bellies.  
We strive for another world  
Perhaps the world from before.  
But the world from before  
Is gone.  
So  
We must grow  
Something new.



# GATHERING STORM

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*1-6 players*

*A deck of cards*

*A coin*

*A piece of paper*

*Writing implements*

*An hour or so*

## THE GAME

**Take turns to read this text out loud. The player whose birthday is nearest the start of the year can go first. At each TITLE, change reader.**

In this game we will tell a story of a newly liberated land, a land coming to terms with its past and trying to form something new. The Authority has left, but they've left us with this alien fruit, many bad memories, and a hundred things unsaid.

## SAFETY

This is a game that can involve material around colonialism and trauma, so should be played with care for all involved. Place your **coin** on the table, heads-side up. If anyone is ever uncomfortable with what is being discussed, turn the coin over for the group to change subject.

## TRUTHS

Now we will create our setting, the place where our story will take place and where we live. The following things are true about our community:

- We fought for our **freedom**, but memories of the time before are still raw.
- The galaxy outside is **hostile** and treacherous.
- The alien power, the **Authority**, is gone, but still has a hold. People, industries and memories still remain. Processing their alien fruit is our main employment and source of trade.

These truths can be threatened over the course of play.

## UNCOVERING

This is a game of uncovering a world together.

Together we will create a **map** and a **story**. We will build up the map as we play. Each player will add something new to each place. Eventually we will know more about this place, and we will seek to know the community that lives here.

This story is based on a real place and real events, but we will imagine another planet, and a particular place on that planet where all the characters now live.



# SETTING

## OUR LAND

First we'll describe a far-away world. We'll take a few minutes to choose or invent five aspects of the local **environment**, while we **draw** them on our piece of paper, starting our **Map**. What does our land look like? What are the main features?

*Red dust landscape, twin moons, low mist, shimmering haze, jagged rock, rolling fields, verdant crops, bioluminescent moss, deep jungle, angular craft, drifting clouds, blazing sun, cool breeze, rolling rivers, wind turbines, smooth forms, curved chrome, orange sky, smoking vents, cool streams, vivid flowers, churned-up tracks, crystal growths, sprawling roots, quiet ruins, murky swamp, heavy heat, cool breeze, canopy, intense scent, birdsong, silence, dappled light, heavy rain, teeming with life, deserted, sweet odour, quietude, wilds, fluorescent lighting, grasping vines, multichromatic haze, strange critters, large beasts*

## SETTLEMENT

Now we'll draw a **settlement** somewhere suitable in the middle of the map. As we draw, we'll give the settlement a name. What does it look like?

*spherical dwellings, cuboid forms, fractal architecture, clean lines, organic forms, elevated homes, dusty bioshells, holograms, crystal structures, smooth stone, modular buildings, vine-covered, blazing lights, subtle glow, grown from the earth, built of metal, deep caves*

## WHO WE ARE

Now let's take a few minutes to choose or invent three aspects of **who we are**. What do we look like? What do we do together? How do we live together?

*large, small, hairy, smooth, reptilian, mammalian, vegetal, fungal, amphibian, lithe, ponderous, loud, quiet, eating, drinking, dancing, signing, playing, fighting, debating, painting, looking, reading, cooking, building, writing, storytelling, burrowing, bathing*

## OUR AREA

We'll take turns to draw and describe **three more sites**.

*Dark Forest, Winding River, Verdant Highlands, Hermitage Shack, Rebel Base, Cursed Place, Fathomless Caves, Scorched Lands, Great Mountains, Deserted homesteads*

Does anyone live in these places? If so, we'll note their **name** at the location.

## THE AUTHORITY

Now let's choose or invent three aspects of **the Authority**, the alien power that has recently left. What do they look like? What did they do together? What did they do to maintain control before they were forced to leave? We'll **draw** their *Abandoned Headquarters* on the map as we describe the Authority.

*large, small, hairy, smooth, reptilian, mammalian, vegetal, fungal, amphibian, lithe, ponderous, loud, quiet, eating, drinking, dancing, signing, playing, fighting, debating, painting, looking, reading, cooking, building, writing, storytelling, burrowing, bathing*

## THE AUTHORITY'S INFLUENCE

The Authority still has an influence on some of our places. We'll **draw** the Authority's remaining sites on the Map; *the Colonial Farmstead, the Industrial Cannery*.

## REMNANTS OF THE AUTHORITY

What has the Authority **left behind**? We'll **draw** some features on the Map.

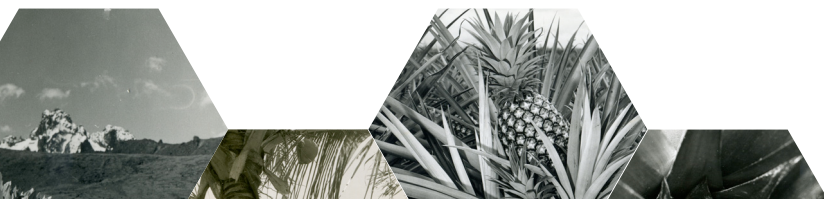
*strange creature, intricate flower, deserted camp, something hidden, something forgotten, stacks of cans, machinery, packed containers, uniforms, rotting fruit, vast hangars, maze of boxes, piles of papers, abandoned complex, wreckage, tubs of poison, agricultural machinery, tattered tarps, someone's diary, mould and spores, web-covered furniture, photographs in cracked frames, moss and lichen, inscrutable technology, empty storerooms, wardrobe of clothes, burnt documents, abandoned outposts, defunct Authority branding, canned alien fruit, wrecked spaceships, rusted bolts, vats of poisons, clunky machines*

## ALIEN FRUIT

The economy revolves around an alien foodstuff, grown for profit and export. This plant was introduced by the Authority, and requires the use of toxins to survive.

Let's choose or invent three aspects of this **alien fruit**. How did this fruit change the land? How did this fruit change you? We'll **draw** the fruit, and then draw the *Vast Plantation* on the Map.

*Sweet, sour, nourishing, aromatic, addictive, psychotropic, stinky, juicy, sharp, smooth, delicious, pungent, deadly, restorative, substantial, succulent, buttery, luscious, fleshy, gourd-like, berry, bean, plump, shriveled, creamy, fragrant, moist, pulpy, seeded, tangy*



# THE CARDS

## CHARACTERS & SECRETS

Now we take a **pack of cards**. Separate them into the **characters** (jacks, queens, kings), the **secrets** (the remaining Hearts, Ace to ten, with the two Jokers), and the **oracle** (a deck of the remaining cards), **removing the Ace of Spades**. Shuffle all three decks separately, and shuffle the Ace of Spades into the **second half** of the oracle. Deal the character cards out, one each to each player, and place the rest face up on the map at suitable locations. Deal out a secret, face down, to each character. Consult the Character and the Secrets table for your own character.

Take it in turns to **introduce your characters** and the characters on the map.

*What is their name and appearance? What do people say about this Person?*

*Also think about how your secret effects your character, but keep it private from the group.*

*Keep the map characters' secrets **hidden**, and place them under their character card.*

## THE ORACLE

Take it in turns to **take a card from the oracle** and consult the **oracle table**. **Read the event**. **Describe** the action and **draw** something to represent the event on the map. Once completed, play passes to the left.

It is close to the **celebration of independence**. When the **Ace of Spades** is drawn the day arrives, and everyone gathers at the Settlement to celebrate.

## CHARACTER TABLE

♠ King	<b>The Settler-Farmer</b>	Born in the land of the Authority, anxious
♠ Queen	<b>The Horticulturalist</b>	Tends the Alien fruit, develops hybrids
♠ Jack	<b>The Farmhand</b>	Works the land of the Alien fruit
♥ King	<b>The Rebel Loner</b>	Lives alone, once a hero of the rebellion
♥ Queen	<b>The Leader</b>	Looks after the people of the Settlement
♥ Jack	<b>The Freedom Fighter</b>	Fought for freedom, but what is life now?
♣ King	<b>The Soldier</b>	Has seen conflict, but on which side?
♣ Queen	<b>The Factory Manager</b>	Oversees processing of the Alien fruit
♣ Jack	<b>The Police Officer</b>	Kept order before, keeps order now
♦ King	<b>The Bureaucrat</b>	Arranges shipments and payments
♦ Queen	<b>The Worker</b>	Works processing Alien Fruit, dreamer
♦ Jack	<b>The Archivist</b>	Writes of the times before, and times now

# ORACLE ACE

## ACE

- ◆ The occupation left you all altered. **Everyone say something** about how that time changed you.
- ♣ Someone discovers a vast trove of paperwork hidden by the occupation. What does it show? Who is implicated?
- ♠ Finally, it is the celebration day of independence. Who unburdens a secret? What does this change? **Everyone say something** about how our story ends, each player offering final words.

## SECRETS TABLE

A past that shapes the present. The **secret** is something that happened or started during the occupation by the Authority. Think about how it effects the character and their actions.

♥ A	Murderer
♥ 2	Informant
♥ 3	Collaborator
♥ 4	The Betrayed
♥ 5	Thief
♥ 6	Lover
♥ 7	Witness
♥ 8	Trauma
♥ 9	Lover
♥ 10	The Bereaved
★ Joker	Strange Fruit Addict

# ORACLE 2-4

## TWO

- ◆ Two people who live here decide to commit themselves to each other. Who performs the rituals for the union? Describe the moment.
- ♣ Someone vows to reclaim what the occupation have taken. Who? Why?
- ♠ **A secret is revealed.** Is the wider community altered?

## THREE

- ◆ A character reveals their **secret card** and speaks. Who reacts badly?
- ♣ A character reveals their **secret card** and speaks. Who is changed?
- ♠ **A secret is revealed.** Does it make things better or worse?

## FOUR

- ◆ The cannery is still running, exporting tinned alien fruit. Who benefits?
- ♣ Someone is stealing the alien fruit. Why? What happens?
- ♠ The cannery is giving out free cans to the people to celebrate independence. How does everyone react?



## ORACLE 5-6

### FIVE

- ◆ Someone speaks up about grievances from before the occupation. **Everyone say something** about the old conflicts of this community.
- ♣ Someone who has been spraying the crops has fallen ill. What happens?
- ♠ Conflict flares up among community members. Who is involved and why? **Everyone say something** about how it's resolved.

### SIX

- ◆ The children have made a new game. What is it? Who disapproves?
- ♣ The children have made a new song. What is it? Who is made happy?
- ♠ The children are witnesses to a secret. What is it?

## ORACLE 7-8

### SEVEN

- ◆ Your character is leaving the community. Why are they leaving? Remove your character card from play, and choose a character and secret from the characters on the map. The departing character reveals their **secret**. **Everyone say something** about how they react to this change and the secret.
- ♣ A settler child has started climbing the fruit trees, copying the other children of the settlement. Who disapproves?
- ♠ A storm is brewing. Which two characters meet as they shelter?

### EIGHT

- ◆ The harvest is starting. Who is happy? Who is sad?
- ♣ The alien fruit has evolved in an unusual way. Who notices? What happens?
- ♠ Someone is stealing the pesticide. Who? Why?





# ORACLE 9-10

## NINE

- ◆ Creatures are dying where the pesticide is used. **Which creatures?** **Everyone say something** about the community's reaction.
- ♣ Someone calls for the cannery and plantation to come into community hands. What happens?
- ♠ Someone from outside is proposing terms to purchase the cannery. How does the community react? **Everyone say something** about what happens.

## TEN

- ◆ Who calls for reconciliation with the Authority? **Everyone say something** about why this is a good or bad idea.
- ♣ A terrible atrocity is revealed from the time of the Authority. What was the atrocity? Who uncovers it? What happens?
- ♠ A settler family is leaving. Why is their child sad? What happens?

**Playtested** by Derek Tumala, Maya Marshak, Viviana Checchia, Yasmine Sefraoui, Emilio Hernández Martínez, Agnes Cameron

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# GATHERING STORM

by David Blandy

*My grandfather always regretted what happened in Kenya. The introduction of the pineapple cash crop, the use of insecticides like DDT that destroyed a whole ecosystem, the enclosure of lands, the entire colonial project. It was the beginning of the silent spring, at the time of a last brutal chapter for the British Empire.*

*He was a part of the Swynnerton Plan, a British scheme to create an indigenous land-owning class in Kenya, consolidating colonial authority through agriculture. The plan failed to quell the rebellion, but helped to create a corporate pineapple industry that survives to this day. But now the earth is burning, crops are failing, and people try to live on.*

## Influences

*A Grain of Wheat* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o  
*Parable of the Talents* by Octavia Butler  
*The Quiet Year* by Avery Alder  
*Orbital* by Jack Harrison  
*The Deep Forest* by Mark Diaz Truman and Avery Alder  
*The Ground Itself* by Everest Pipkin  
*Beak, Feather & Bone* by Tyler Crumrine  
*The Word for World is Forest* by Ursula K. Le Guin

**Gathering Storm** was developed during Delfina Foundation's fifth season of *The Politics of Food*, for which David Blandy was a UK associate artist. This season is made possible through the partnership of Gaia Art Foundation, with additional support from a range of partners and individuals.