

THIS DISCORD HAS
GHOSTS IN IT

ADAM VASS &
WILL DORST

this discord has ghosts in it

by adam vass and will jobst
(@wcgameco and @will_jobst)

design by adam vass and will jobst

writing and development by will jobst

additional writing by adam vass

the differences between ghosts and poltergeists by seb pines (@smolghost)

cover and layout by adam vass

playtesting by Adam Bell, Paul J Hodgeson, AE Jonesy, Simon Moody, and Viditya Voleti

special thanks to the brain trust.

this discord has ghosts in it is a game of entering and exploring a haunted house filled with ghosts. that haunted house is a discord.

in this game, players are either **investigators** or **ghosts**. only investigators can speak and only ghosts can type. the discord is split up into rooms in a haunted house. ghosts haunt rooms and type their horror into them. investigators explore each room, get spooked, learn about the ghosts, all while narrating the horror to all players. ghosts will reveal parts of their psyche by creating new rooms, making the house a labyrinth.

this game is for two to twelve players, played over the course of one to three hours. with more players, expect a longer game.

setup

before the game, give yourself time to read through the rules and to build the house. here's an outline of setup:

- name the house
- setup categories
- assign permissions
- review safety tools

building the house

in this early access version of *this discord has ghosts in it*, the default template is a classic new england haunted house with sharp staircases, terrible basements, and dark woods. in future versions, we plan to release more templates, from haunted hospitals, castles with scooby doo energy, derelict spaceships, and towns with silent hills.

feel free to use this link to easily copy the template: <https://discord.new/WszU8wTY9R8d>

categories

set up four categories with the following channels in each of them.

setup

- rules (text)
- waiting-room (text)
- lines-and-veils (text)
- frights (text)
- waiting-room (voice)

we can hear you

walkie-talkies (voice) [during the game, all players will join **walkie-talkies**. only the investigators may speak, but everyone will listen.]

first floor

- threshold (text)
- kitchen (text)
- living-room (text)

upstairs

- bedroom (text)

basement

[there are no rooms in the basement at the beginning of the game. during play, ghosts will create basement rooms.]

grounds

- the well (text)

permissions

make sure everyone has access to create channels, as ghosts will be building rooms on the fly during the game.

safety tools

after you've built the house, it's time to review the safety tools. this game uses lines and veils, the x-card, and open table.

lines and veils, from golden lasso games' website:

Lines are hard boundaries that exclude specified content from the game, no questions asked. This could include anything, but common lines are children being harmed, rape or sexual violence, or racial discrimination. Veils are softer limits where the player is ok with it being included in the game but it isn't explicitly described. Things that are specified as veils will be hand-waved without going into detail or happen off-screen, like the fade-to-black sex scenes in a PG movie. You can learn more about them at: <https://rpg.stackexchange.com/questions/30906/what-do-the-terms-lines-and-veils-mean>

x-cards, from golden lasso games' website:

If anyone feels uncomfortable, they simply touch the x-card. The GM and other players will change the scene immediately by skipping it or changing what is happening. The person who activated the x-card is not expected to explain their reasons. You can read more about the x-card at <http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>. John Stavropoulos developed the x-card.

open table, from golden lasso games' website

An open door policy is exactly what it sounds like, players can leave the table or leave the game in a mature manner for any reason without being judged. Obviously, this policy doesn't apply to players who leave the table in a combative or unreasonable way. This can apply to things as simple as restroom breaks, taking phone calls, or going to another room for an emotional cool-down. Everyone at the table is an adult and deserves the respect to take care of their own needs.



now that
everything's
set up,
here's how
to start.

start of play

here's an outline of the start of play:

- draw lines and veils
- assign roles
 - investigators choose name, pronouns, and a cause (hired, inspired, or transpired)
 - ghosts choose bloodline and malign
- choose frights
- create additional rooms as needed (one room per ghost)

draw lines and veils

begin by setting your **lines and veils** in the lines and veils channel. once all the lines and veils are set, screenshot them, write them down, or otherwise make sure they're visible throughout the entire game. the game cannot start until you do this.

after lines and veils are set, each player must type "i agree to honor the lists lines and veils. i understand that crossing these will ban me from this game and future ones."

no one may cross a line and/or incorporate hate speech, white supremacy, human suffering, smut, gore, doxxing, or violate the discord rules of conduct and usage in this game. players that do must be immediately kicked off the server and their messages deleted.

the difference between ghosts and poltergeists

by seb pines, @smolghost

the reason these rules are in place is to maintain player/character agency and that agency is incredibly important in horror. the power of horror comes from the transgressions of the players/characters having consequences and those consequences only have power and impact when people make choices, both good and bad. if you take away their choice then there is no impact to their actions, there is only one-directional harm being done.

it's the difference between a house full of ghosts and a house full of poltergeists. a house full of ghosts is spooky, it's unsettling, but it's a slow progression. it's an act-and-react thing: ghosts and humans coexist in a space and the tension comes from them existing together poorly and the friction is where the horror comes from. a house full of poltergeists is just pure malice, no matter what people do, the poltergeists just want them to get the fuck out or never leave. it's one-sided and dangerous, and the danger is not fun and it's definitely not enjoyable for the receiving side.

assign roles

there are two teams, the investigators and the ghosts. aim for an even amount of each. if there are an uneven number of players, tend toward more ghosts. to indicate which role you'd like, type *investigator*, *ghost*, or *investigator/ghost* in the **frights** channel.

investigators

investigators may speak, but never type. the investigators have been hired, inspired, or transpired to enter a haunted house. throughout the game, they will enter rooms, find the proof of phantoms, and narrate the haunts. the investigators will always discover what happened to the ghosts, and by the end of the game, attempt to release them. all investigators should use the **push-to-talk** option for voice chat. investigators have a name, pronouns, a cause, and a fright

making your investigator

give yourself a name, pronouns, and whether you were **hired**, **inspired**, or **transpired** to enter this house.

hired: you are paid by a third-party

inspired: you are a thrill seeker, a ghost knower, a medium, a cemetery goth

transpired: you are impelled to enter this house for legal, personal, or psychic reasons

do not choose a fright yet. that will be secret and decided once we know who's who. choose secretly from a list of frights. the ghosts will be trying to figure out what your fright is.

investigators must change their display names to their character names including pronouns including their name.

here's an example username: *len robison (they/them)*

ghosts

the ghosts may type, but never speak. the ghosts are the spectral residents in this house. throughout the game, ghosts will haunt rooms, call investigators, and by the end of the game, choose whether or not they want to leave this world. ghosts have a title, a bloodline, and a malign.

making your ghost

give yourself a nonsense name, a bloodline, and a malign.

a bloodline is a name you're associated with that has split your spirit between worlds, the you before you became a ghost.

a malign is the cosmic wrong that created this split. it's what disturbs your soul from rest.

during the game, you will change your nonsense name to a title, once you've revealed your bloodline and your malign to the investigators

for nonsense names, go to <http://www.eeemo.net/> and fuck it up maxi. here's a sample:

optional rule: spectating spectres

if there are players that want to listen and watch, they may! all spectres must change their display names to spectre. spectres cannot speak or type, but they can append emoji reactions

choose frights

that's my worst nightmare

now, everyone should navigate to the frights channel. here, everyone should list three frights. frights are phobias, worst nightmares, chilling imagery, or something otherwise benign that ghosts can have fun with. this serves as the palette for the game. ghosts use this list of frights to inspire their haunt.

here are some examples: fire, strangers, insects, heights, deep water, hair, holes, the void, books that give you headaches, a mean car.

once everyone has three frights, each investigator secretly chooses two frights that really get them spooked. mark them down somewhere in your physical space: notecard, pen on arm, fake blood on mirror.

when a ghost's haunt incorporates that investigators' fright, the investigator must clearly announce it. when ghosts know both of the investigator's frights, they may @mention them to call them to a room (more on this in the **ghosts: calling investigators** section).

the haunt is on

everyone joins the voice channel walkie talkies. investigators set their microphones to push-to-talk. ghosts must mute their microphones, but may listen to everything the investigators say.

investigators begin by describing themselves, their cause (hired, inspired, or transpired), and their name. feel free to come up with a reason you all are together, or if all of you were drawn here on the same night for separate reasons.

investigators exploring

maybe we should split up?

investigators all start in the threshold. after that, they may go anywhere. investigators may split up, or stay together, or any combination.

when an investigator enters a room with a **haunt**, they must read aloud and react to the text. narrate how you enter the room, what you see, your reaction, and speak to the other investigators with your walkie talkie.

if an investigator sees “ghost is typing...” they are not allowed to leave the room until the message is sent.

investigators: releasing ghosts

it's all here, we can change this.

once a ghost has a title, a bloodline, and a malign, and the allotted game time is nearly finished, the investigators gather in a room specific to the ghost. the investigator(s) then encapsulate the ghost's story. the ghost may take this opportunity to provide more details, to provide clarity, to struggle against this process. this is the climax of the game.

ask them whether or not they would like to be released. the ghost may respond either way. once each ghost has been confronted, the investigators may leave the house.

investigators unravelling stories

i know what happened here.

investigators are here to discover the root of the hauntings. each ghost has a bloodline and a malign that needs to be discovered. a bloodline is their life and place in the world before they crossed over. a malign is the cosmic wrong that created their restless soul. through the game, try and dig deeper and discover the stories of these ghosts. as you do, the ghost's name will become apparent, and you'll get access to new rooms that reveal more about these phantoms.

ghosts: haunt

playing the ghost.

to haunt, enter a room and type your ghostly actions there.

as a ghost, choose a room and type words, sentences, post links to music, sounds, post non-explicit images. write messages on physical paper and take and upload pictures of it. when posting music links, use youtube, soundcloud, or anything that will play without a subscription.

multiple ghosts can haunt a room at the same time.

ghosts may change things in the room, bring new things into the fold, and manipulate reality.

ghosts never kill the investigator.

ghosts: calling

i know what waits for them in the dark.

once the ghosts have discovered the two frights of any investigator, they may use the @ function to direct investigators to specific rooms. investigators can only call for ghosts using their voices. it's up to ghosts whether or not it works.

ghosts: new rooms

make this house a labyrinth.

ghosts can make new rooms as channels in the existing four folders (first floor, upstairs, grounds, basement) once every room has been explored by the investigators, or once the ghost has revealed their title to the investigators. to create a new room, navigate to the floor and click +. name the room, provide a brief description, and haunt it.

rooms should have something to do with the ghosts' bloodline and their malign, or with the frights of the investigators. good rooms have one of these, and great rooms have two or three. try and reveal information about yourself to the investigators through environments, vague gestures, imagery. as the game goes on, get more specific, more clear, more horrifying. give the investigators the tools they need to release you into the unseen world. a new room could be a hidden library, something filled with birds, a creepy attic, a tree that looks mean, a dimensional portal, a mothball-ridden closet, or anything you choose to conjure.

optional rule: floor tone

do you feel that? it's a cold spot.

for an additional challenge, consider adding the following constraints to the haunt. there are four levels of haunt: first floor, upstairs, the grounds, and basement. first floor haunts are unsettling but not explicit. upstairs haunts are dreamlike and surreal. grounds haunts are overgrown and breathtaking. basement haunts are gritty and sharp-toothed.

ending the game

the game is over when all the ghosts have had their final confrontation. after that, the investigators leave, but not without looking back at that house, one last time.

investigators describe one thing they notice about the house

ghosts describe one thing they notice about the investigators after they leave

this is an early access version of this discord has ghosts in it. we hope you enjoy! with your support, we're able to dedicate more time and money toward developing this game. have feedback? let us know with this google form: <https://forms.gle/Mv5vzugkMxhK3Eye6>.

what's next? we aim to improve and extend the rules, provide more optional rules, house templates, settings, and more!

get more
games
from the
Brain
Trust
willjobst.itch.io
worldchampgameco.itch.io