



THE SKY IS GRAY
AND YOU ARE DISTRESSED

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THE SKY IS GRAY, AND YOU ARE DISTRESSED

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*Layout by Michael Wenman
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*The sky is gray, and you are distressed is a game for
two players in less than an hour.*

*This game is inspired by and contains a
modified version of “Questions of Character”
from Joseph Chaikin’s *The Presence of the Actor*.*

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BEFORE YOU PLAY

Read these rules before you play. One of you will play Frank. Some people call him shy. He used to play soccer. He carries a nice umbrella. One of you will play Meg. She is a volunteer firefighter who never swears. She collects winter coats.

When you are ready to play, first decide the relationship between the two characters. Are they best friends, spouses, or a parent and child? Next, the person playing Meg rolls two six-sided dice. She may roll them twice if she wants. Make sure both players see what you roll. Now, read the following options and discuss each before you play.

TRIGGER WARNING

This game is a conversation between two people who are close to each other. One of them has a secret. The conversation may involve subjects of death, infidelity, religion, abuse, or the threat of violence. Before you play, tell the other player which of these subjects you don't want in your game.

GUIDE TO TOUCH

You may incorporate touch into this game, if both players want to. If you do, at the beginning of the game, hold hands. Whenever the rules tell Frank to look away, instead he rubs the back of Meg's hand for a moment. Whenever the rules tell Meg to look down, she instead pulls her hand away from Frank's for a moment. At the end of the game, instead of turning away from each other, hug briefly and awkwardly.

SIGNALS TO THE OTHER PLAYER

If you need to stop the game, either to take a break or to discuss the game out of character, make a "T" with your hands. If you become uncomfortable with the subject matter, but you want to keep playing, cover your ears with your hands. This is a signal to the other player to change the topic of conversation to something less uncomfortable for you.

WHAT TO DO AT THE END

After you have finished the game, take a few minutes to talk about the experience with the other player. Were there things that you meant to say, but didn't? Were there parts of the game you had strong feelings about? How are you feeling now?

AFTER YOU HAVE PLAYED SEVERAL TIMES

If you are a veteran player of this game, try using these secrets instead. Ignore the tables on Frank and Meg's instructions and use this one instead. Both players secretly roll four six-sided dice and consult this chart.

LIST OF GONZO SECRETS

RESULT	SECRET
4	I can speak to cats.
5	I worship something that lives in our closet.
6	I'm a cyborg.
7	I work for the CIA.
8	I have been in Witness Protection for fifteen years.
9	I'm from the future. My time machine stopped working when I came here.
10	There are six bodies under the concrete in our cellar. I put them there.
11	There's a South American cartel coming to kill me.
12	I'm actually identical twins. We take turns being your spouse.
13	I'm older than I look. I used to be married to your mother.
14	Happy anniversary, but I died on our wedding night.
15	I'm an android.
16	I'm from another planet
17	I was secretly replaced by a clone
18	I've never put the toilet seat down, and I don't know who keeps doing it
19	I'm a hologram
20	I'm a vampire, but a good vampire.
21	I'm a kitsune.
22	The holy grail is in our attic.
23	I still talk to my ex.
24	I was the one who killed your dog.

FRANK

[You are playing Frank. Read text in brackets ([]) silently. From this point forward, read text not in brackets out loud.]

[If the other player asks you a question, answer it in character or out of character. But be honest and look them in the eye while you speak.]

[When you are done answering a question, look away for a moment. Looking away for a moment is your signal to the other player that you are done with your answer.]

[You suspect that Meg is keeping something from you. Look at the dice the other player rolled. If she rolled less than seven, you suspect that she feels guilty about something. If she rolled seven or more, you suspect that something is scaring her.]

FRANK

The sky is gray and one of us is distressed.

[Look away for a moment. Meg will speak. When she looks down for a moment, that's your cue to say your next line.]

We both know. We've known each other a long time, and we know when there's something between us.

[Look away for a sec. Meg's turn to talk again.]

I'll go first, Meg. When you look at me who do you see?

[Meg's turn]

When I look at you, who do you think I see?

[Meg's turn]

What can't be seen by anyone? Is that still a part of you?

[Meg's turn.]

Okay, now it's my turn again. Is there some part of you that hasn't lived yet?

[If Meg answers yes, wait until she finishes, then ask,]

What would bring that part of you to life?

[Meg will answer, then ask you two more questions. When you have answered her last question, look down.]

Goodbye. Thank you.

[Turn away from each other.]



MEG

Look at the dice you rolled. You have a secret. If you rolled twice, you have two secrets. It is up to you whether to share these with Frank during the game.

LIST OF SECRETS

RESULT	SECRET
2	I have a disability you don't know about.
3	I've changed religions.
4	I've been sober for three months
5	I used to steal from your parents.
6	I don't work there anymore.
7	I have an ex who wants to hurt you.
8	I was attacked a month ago.
9	I did something terrible to end my last relationship.
10	I have a child you've never met.
11	I don't trust your best friend.
12	I accepted a job three hundred miles away.

[You are playing Meg. Read text in brackets ([/i>) silently. From this point forward, read text not in brackets out loud.]

[If the other player asks you a question, answer it in character or out of character. But be honest and look them in the eye while you speak. When you are done answering a question, look down for a moment. Looking down for a moment is your signal to the other player that you are done with your answer.]

MEG

[Frank speaks first. When he's done, he will look away.]

We don't need to say which one of us is distressed.

[Look down for a moment. Frank's turn to say something.]

We need to talk. We need to clear the air.

[Frank's turn to ask you some questions.]

Okay, now it's my turn. Who am I to you?
How do you describe me to people?

[Frank's turn.]

Do you ever wish that you had never met me?

[Frank's turn to ask another question or two.]

Okay, it's my turn again, Frank.
Is there some part of you that feels trapped when you are with me?

[Frank's turn.]

Is there anything else I need to know?

[Frank's turn. When he is done, he will give you a clear signal.]

Goodbye. Thank you.

[Turn away from each other.]

