



# pieces

*A cooperative roleplaying game  
about bodies and body horror.*

You are trapped.

Your **pieces** are your only resources.

Escape, or **fall apart** trying.

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## about

For 3+ players. Requires paper, drawing utensils, scissors, tape, a 4-sided die, a deck of 52 cards (jokers removed), and a bag.

## the paper

*pieces* is a game experimenting with the *paper* aspect of pen-and-paper tabletop gaming.

These instructions include a printable page that is required for play, which includes a paper doll template.

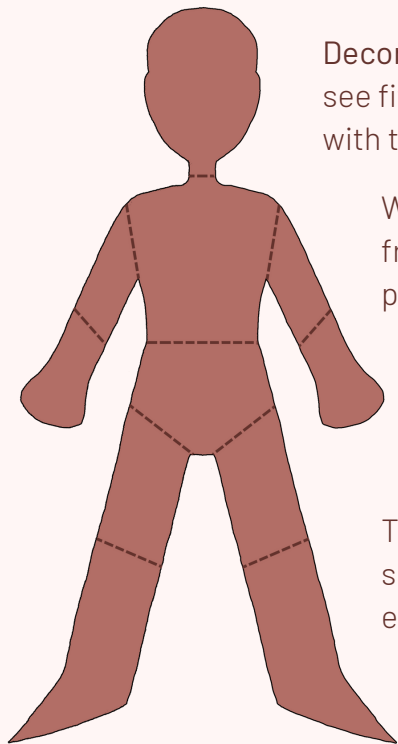
See page 11 for alternate ways to play, for players without printers or who wish to avoid paper waste.

## the genre

Body horror is a subgenre of horror that focuses on disturbing and gross displays of mutation, gore, transformation, and unnatural or inhuman bodies.

## the body

Print out a paper **body** for each player. Sit in a circle and spread out the drawing utensils to share.



Decorate the body however you see fit by drawing on the paper with the drawing utensils.

When you finish, cut it out from the page, keeping all the pieces attached.

Each piece is separated by a dashed line. You start with 10.

The head is not a piece, and should remain with you the entire game.

## the center

Decorate the extra pieces from the printable as well. Cut those out and put them in the **bag**, then leave the bag in the center of the circle.

Cut out the **token** from the paper body page and fold it in half so one side reads *SACRIFICE* and the other reads *ABSTAIN*.

Leave that token in front of you for the duration of the game, where everyone can see.

Place the **scissors** on or beside the bag.

Reshuffle the **deck** of cards and place it in the center as well.

## the world

You and your bodies are **trapped**.

Who or what has trapped you? How? What demands your pieces? Science? Magic? Technology? Religion?

See pages 9-10 for more inspiration.

## the game

The person who's been to the doctor's most recently goes first. Roll the 4-sided die and draw that many cards.

Consult the chart and pick a situation using one of the cards. Discard the card.

Players willing to resolve the situation must flip their token so it reads *SACRIFICE*. Players with no pieces cannot sacrifice.

Everyone else should flip the token to read *ABSTAIN*.

Count down from 3 and have everyone flip their tokens at once.

## the resolution

Those who chose to act then must each make their argument for resolving the situation to the group.

Once everyone has spoken, vote on each argument. The body with the most votes will take their action and sacrifice their pieces.

## the situations



This situation demands invocation.



This situation demands rejection.



This situation demands cooperation.



This situation demands conflict.

A

The room you are in is locked.

2

Something hunts you down.

3

Your bodies are rebelling.

4

A virus is spreading.

5

A tormentor demands your obedience.

6

Something wants to assimilate you.

7

Someone wants to become you.

8

Aggressors attempt to capture you.

9

An assailant demands your cleansing.

10

Mutation threatens to overtake you.

J

Someone wants to study you.

Q

A stranger demands your devotion.

K

An authority wants you to turn back.

## sacrifice

Roll the 4-sided die to determine how many pieces you lose, then cut that number off your body and put them in the bag.

How does your body lose these pieces? Where do they go?

## abstain

Everyone who chose *ABSTAIN* can randomly pick a piece out from the bag to **add** to your body.

How do you gain these pieces? Why?

## penalty

If no one chose *SACRIFICE*, everyone loses one piece to resolve the situation.

What happens if no one acted? How does this resolve?

## continue

The player who has last sacrificed then can roll the 4-sided die and draw that many cards to generate a **new** situation.

## the end

Continue until you run out of cards or you are all happy with the amount of pieces you each have.

Finish the game by taping your pieces together into a **new body**.

Are you happy with this? Do you escape? Are you still human?

## movies

The *Saw* series:  
sacrifice begets change

*Society* (1989)'s shunting:  
those lesser are for consumption

*Repo Men* (2010) & *Repo! The Genetic Opera*:  
you don't own your parts

*The Human Centipede* (2009):  
the violence of domination

*The Fly* (1986):  
you are losing control of yourself

*Upgrade* (2018):  
your body is not your own

*District 9* (2009):  
you are becoming alien

*The Thing* (1982) & other Cronenberg works:  
fear assimilation

*Hellraiser* (1987)'s cenobites:  
pain is pleasure

## games

The *Deus Ex* series:  
this is a body you did not want

*Inside* (2016):  
there is no escape

The *Dead Space* series' necromorphs:  
terror in mutation

*Outlast* (2013):  
suffering for profit

## other

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley:  
existence is not your choice

Junji Ito's *Tomie* and other works:  
obsession and compulsion

*The Magnus Archives* 17, 90, 115, & 130:  
control your shape

## alternatives

The use of paper is required for *pieces*, as it's important to the nature of the game. The concept of cutting up a paper doll and taping it back together is integral to the themes of body horror and sacrifice.

However, for players who don't have access to a printer, prefer to reduce paper waste, or just don't want to deal with printables, there is the option to use scrap materials instead.

Old mail, newspaper, packing paper, or even cardboard boxes are all viable materials. Try out different things and use what works for your group.

The look of the body isn't important — any size or shape will do. As long as you are able to cut off pieces and put them back together later, the game is still playable.

## content warnings

*pieces* is based on the body horror genre and deals with themes of sacrifice, control over your own body, and what makes you human.

The game can be lighthearted or very serious, depending on the players. Because of this, each time you play, decide on the tone you want to pursue as a group before beginning the game.

## redraw

At any point in the game, when generating or interpreting a situation, you can ask for a **redraw**. Once a redraw is asked for, it must happen.

A redraw can mean either re-interpreting the situation you have or drawing a new card for a completely new situation.

If possible, explain your reason for calling for a redraw to the group so that another redraw can be avoided.

## a game by

Elena Murphy (@thefatalst). Find more games at [fatalst.itch.io](https://fatalst.itch.io).

## the credits

Thanks to Xander (@cosmickaiju / [cosmickaiju.itch.io](https://cosmickaiju.itch.io)) and Reese (@lisstles) for the support!

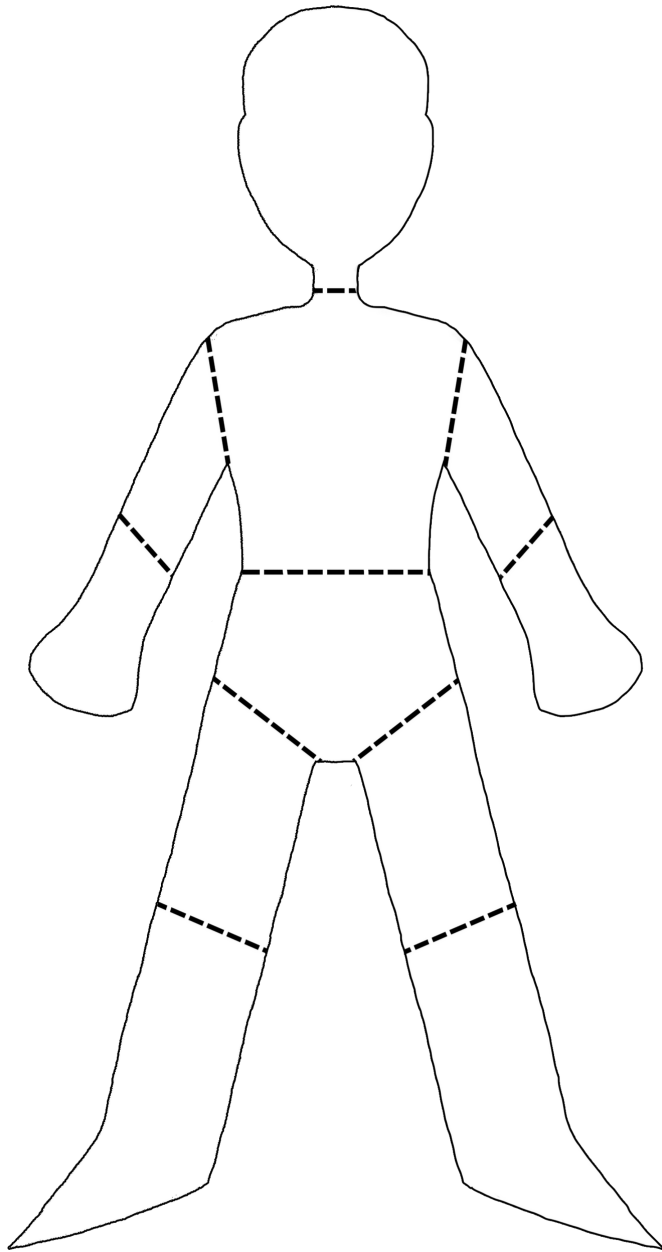
Shout out to *The Magnus Archives* podcast and *Dead Meat* on YouTube for inspiring the creation of this game.

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Feel free to hack this game or make any other derivative work. Just credit Elena Murphy (@thefatalst) somewhere if you use any of the material.







SACRIFICE	ABSTAIN
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