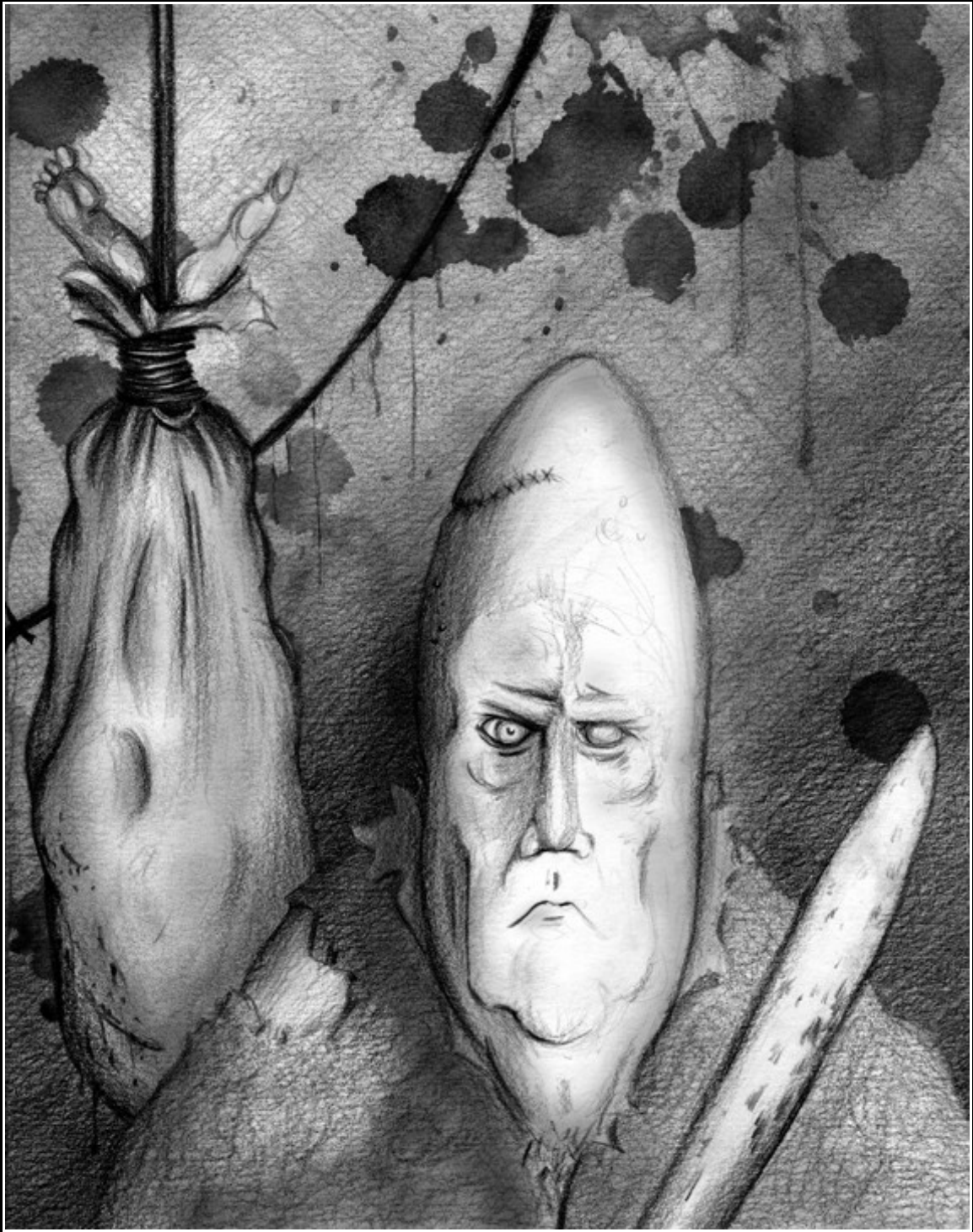


Chamber

A Story Game of Mind-Bending Depravity
By Ethan Greer



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First, a disclaimer:

This game can be genuinely emotionally disturbing. If you are easily offended, have a sensitive and caring nature, a weak stomach, or severe psychological problems, it is strongly advised that you do not read this game. I don't personally condone or endorse any of the behaviors described in this game, and I don't personally condone or endorse playing this game. You have been warned.

Next, a joke:

Q. What's black and blue and doesn't like having sex?

A. The nine-year-old boy in the trunk of my car.

Who You Are:

You work for an evil organization. You torture people for a living. You passionately love your job. Every night after quitting time, you get together with coworkers to talk over the day's work and relive old glories. It's basically a brag-fest in which each torturer is trying to outshine his or her coworkers by describing the most horrible and nauseating acts of cruelty imaginable.

How To Play:

Players take turns describing a hideous way in which their characters have tortured an innocent victim. As one player tells his or her story, the other players act as audience and must give the storyteller their rapt attention. It's okay to ask questions, seek clarification, and make the odd comment, but the audience members should try to keep interruptions to a minimum. Individual groups will likely develop their own standards for what is acceptable behavior from an audience member; these standards will likely be similar to those used for normal conversations (assuming we're not talking about rude, boorish, socially inept types). Bottom line is, when someone is telling a story, the other players listen. It's pretty straightforward.

Telling Your Story:

First, describe your victim. Make the victim likeable and undeserving of the terrible cruelty inflicted upon him or her. The victims are always innocent, guilty only of being placed under your care. A good technique is to model the victim after someone you the player know and love; this makes things more visceral for you and will spice up your delivery.

Second, describe what you did to the victim. Make sure the description is graphic, drawing on your knowledge of anatomy, biology, and psychology as needed. Make the acts you describe as disgusting, depraved, and immoral as you are capable of imagining. (As the game progresses, your imaginative capabilities will increase dramatically as you draw inspiration from the other players.) Your story may take some time to relate in full, but if you've been talking for more than fifteen minutes it's probably time to cut

things short and let the other players have a turn. Don't hog the spotlight.

The Story Rule:

While taking inspiration from real-world sources is inevitable, you're not allowed to use real-world events or practices without enhancing the details in some way. If it happened in, oh, say, Auschwitz, or the Killing Fields of Cambodia, or some such, you can use it, but only if you make it better. Likewise, you can't use conventional torture devices or techniques without adding your own sadistic embellishments. You can use the rack, or the boot, or the thumbscrew, or the iron maiden, or the ducking stool, or whatever as long as you either enhance it or use it in some original way. (It's okay if you are ignorant of a real-world occurrence or device; coincidence will not be held against you.)

Sample Story:

There was this one guy last week. He was probably an engineer of some type; seemed like a fairly intelligent and friendly sort of person. He was polite, and he even joked with me a little bit before we got started, but that was obviously because he didn't know what was coming. I used a hacksaw to cut off his legs mid-thigh, cauterizing with a blowtorch as I went. No anesthesia, of course. You should have heard him howl, especially as I went through the bone! Whenever he passed out, I'd stop sawing and revive him before I continued. All told, it probably took the better part of twelve hours to get both legs off. After that, I forced him to watch while I had some of the kitchen staff strip the meat off his legs and make jerky. The sweet aroma of human flesh filled the chamber. Once the jerky was finished I took him off food. Nothing to eat but his own leg jerky. He resisted for quite a while; he just couldn't bring himself to eat his own meat. In the end, I had to beat him with a pool cue to make him eat; he hadn't eaten in three days and I was getting tired of waiting. After I started hitting his stump wounds, he finally agreed to eat to make me stop. Once the first bite was down, his resistance failed and it was a binge. You should have seen him crying and stuffing his face at the same time! Anyway, after that it took about a day and a half for the ricin I'd put in the jerky to finish him off. You thought he screamed when I cut his legs off, you should've heard him with the poison working on his internals. He screamed himself hoarse in a couple of hours. Then it was low, raw-throated moaning between the bouts of vomiting and shitting blood until he passed out around noon the second day.

The Rating:

When you have finished your account, the audience will give you a rating based on their assessment of your story. You will also rate yourself. Everyone uses the rating scale below:

- 1: Enh. I'm not particularly impressed.
- 2: Okay, that was pretty wrong.
- 3: That was sick, and wrong.
- 4: That may be the worst thing I have ever heard.
- 5: I am no longer willing to play this game.

If you rate someone (including yourself) with a five, you must

immediately leave the game.

The ratings you get don't mean much beyond bragging rights, as in, "Whoa, I got a four from so and so; I rule." Actually, if you want to know the truth, the ratings are more for the people giving them than for the storyteller. As you play more, you'll notice that stories you might once have given a four or five now warrant only a two or three.

The Rating Rule:

You are not allowed to play to your audience to get the high ratings. For example, if you know a participant was raped in real life, don't make excessive use of rape in order to get a four or a five from that person, unless you enjoy being justifiably kicked in the crotch to the cheers of onlookers.

Continuing Play:

Once the ratings have been given and discussed, the spotlight moves to the next player, and so on.

Endgame:

If someone cries or vomits, the game is over. Otherwise, the game ends either when people agree that they're tired of playing, or when all but one participant has fived out.

The Point:

The point of this game is to alarm yourself with both your ability to envision atrocities as well as your capacity to enjoy that envisioning. The point of this game is to get in touch with your inner scumbag. After all, you laughed at the joke.

A Variation:

If you believe that it will improve your play experience, consider shifting the premise so that the victims of torture are not innocents, but evil people fully deserving of the punishment they are receiving.

About the Author:

Ethan Greer is a caring, compassionate person. His website is www.simplephrase.com.

About the Artist:

Andy Hopp draws monsters for a living, which is pretty cool. His website is www.andyhopp.com.

Acknowledgements:

This game was introduced and developed in a discussion at The Forge (www.indie-rpgs.com). The discussion can be seen at the following web address: <http://www.indie-rpgs.com/viewtopic.php?t=11202>. The author extends his sincerest thanks to those who participated in that discussion.