

Shady Grove

A competitive puzzle game for 4 players. An unusual twist on a game a little less random than go fish and bingo, players start the game with little understanding for the reason of play or the meaning of the game. Only through discussion and play are players able to reach informed decisions about the choices they make.

After the game, players are able to tell a unique story about their experience, driven by the choices made during play.

The Shady Grove Narrative Card Game is played once per printing, as the cards are destroyed though play. The purpose of Shady Grove is in part, to uncover the mystery of what story is being told and to encourage discussion. As such, it is only playable once per group, though each player can share it with another group.

Because Shady Grove is a game of discovery, only one player is allowed to know the full text of the game prior to play. To accomplish the managed release of information, the rules of the game are printed on the following pages that are revealed to players as the game plays out.

Shady Grove is a provocative game with a serious subject matter. This game may be uncomfortable for some players. Doctor's discretion is advised.

Note to Game Chef 2012 Last Chance Judges:

The Basic 4 seeds are thematically relevant to [Eriksonian Identity Development](#), and were a natural fit for the game, but they were definitely applied after the idea came to fruition. The original idea was inspired from the "Last Chance" theme, which drove me to create a game that was both physically and thematically destructive, and the following fortuitous Forge Seeds:

[The Tavern](#): A Game where players have to choose between the welfare of themselves vs. the world

[The Pit](#): The player characters are all chained together. In The Pit, the players share a single sheet of paper, in Shady Grove, the players are aspects of a single man's identity.

[Shattered Spirits](#): Character Sheet consists of a Grid

My fourth was a dead link.

Setup

Players start by selecting a role to play during the game, Coyote, Mimic, Lantern Bearer, and Doctor.

Each of these characters has unique rules and triggers that affect the way they play the game.

These role cards are placed face down, as their contents are secret from other players.

Triggers are limited use abilities that can only be activated when a particular condition is met.

Doctor: Wise and Patient, the Doctor understands more than all the other characters, but is also the most vulnerable to loss and grief. Their wisdom makes them more capable of healing.

This player should be the one who introduces the game to the group.

The Doctor starts with the ability to destroy 2 cards per turn.

The Doctor has triggered abilities that can repair damaged memories.

Mimic: Unconfident, the Mimic defines itself based on those around it. The mimic needs a lot of information to learn how to make the right decisions.

The Mimic starts the game with the ability to draw extra cards.

The Mimic has triggers that allow them to copy other triggers already used.

Lantern Bearer: Wise and Strong, the Lantern Bearer finds purpose in helping and nurturing those around it. It thrives on companionship, but can be a wrathful foe.

The Lantern Bearer starts with the ability to give cards to other characters.

The Lantern Bearer has triggers that allow for powerful destructive outbursts.

Coyote: Creative and Mischievous, Coyote has the deepest roots. His memories are the most difficult to destroy. Coyote learns best by trial and error.

Coyote has triggers that allow them to create permanent false memories.

Each player draws a starting hand of seven cards from the Memory Deck.

Rules of Play, Part 1

- Reveal Rules of play Part 2 when a character is eliminated.
- The game ends where there is a single surviving character.
- Each character is composed of a grid of memories. The character cards and their memory grids are secret.
- You can damage a character by destroying the memories that are on its character card.
 - Play starts with the Doctor, and proceeds clockwise.
- At the start of their turn, a player draws cards from the Memories Deck to return their hand size to seven.
- During their turn, a player may destroy a single card out of their hand, and take the actions described on the card.
- Game discussion is encouraged, but players are forbidden to discuss the contents of their character cards **except** the Memories that have been destroyed.
- When a character is eliminated, their remaining hand is shuffled into the Memory Deck.
 - When the Game Ends, reveal rules of Play, Part 3.

Rules of Play, Part 2

- REVISION: During their turn, a player may do any of the following:
 - ❖ Destroy a single card out of their hand, and take the action described
 - ❖ Pass play to the next player without taking an action.
- If all players choose to “pass play” the game ends.
- When the Game Ends, reveal rules of Play, Part 3.

During play, players must keep the actual contents of the Character cards secret, but the surviving characters are encouraged to discuss:

- ❖ What Important Memories have been destroyed?
- ❖ How are these characters related?
- ❖ What is the purpose of the game?

Rules of Play, Part 3

These rules are revealed when the game has ended, either due to all players refusing to act, or only a single character remaining.

- The Doctor should read the following:

Players each represent an identity that The Host held during a time in his life: The Coyote is Childhood, The Mimic is a Teenager, The Lantern Bearer is an Adult, and the Doctor is a Senior. In the Host's old age, Dementia is setting in, and his mind is starting to deconstruct. These identities, supported only by his memories, compete for dominance of his psyche. They do this by destroying the memories critical to supporting the other identities. When the game ends, the cards remaining in player hands and the Memory Deck are what the Host he remembers after this episode.

1. All remaining players place their hands into the remaining cards in the Memory Deck.
2. All players look at the cards in the central deck. These are the memories that the Host still has. Do your best to tell the story of his life, as he still remembers it.

Dementia are the symptoms that can be indicative of many diseases, from Alzheimers to X, and many others. People consider it one of the most terrifying diseases in the modern world, and discussion of dementia is almost taboo.

Most terrifying of all, even though the dementia is non-contagious, people diagnosed with some sort of dementia often find their friends and family breaking contact, or changing the way they are treated immediately after the illness is diagnosed, but long before it has become debilitating.

Discussion Guide

Shady Grove is a sad game about loss and regret.

After the game is complete, players should discuss how they feel.

The following questions can guide discussion to help Shady Grove feel more meaningful.

Think about the memories you've shared while playing this game.

How have they shaped who you are today?

Just because you haven't thought about them or forgot about that, does it diminish the impact they've had on your identity?

What do you think about the Host?

Looking at his memories, both those lost and saved, how has he lived his life?

What do you think his regrets are?

What kind of a person do you think he is?

Coyote

How it Felt to be Held by your Mother

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When the last box of this memory is destroyed, ignore the action text on the memory card. Instead, Coyote destroys a memory out of their hand by writing in a False Memory, and the text

This Memory cannot be destroyed by the player that owns it.

How it Felt when your Stepfather used the belt

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When the last box of this memory is destroyed, ignore the action text on the memory card. Instead, Coyote destroys a memory out of their hand by writing in a False Memory, and the text

This Memory cannot be destroyed by the player that owns it.

Playing Cops and Robbers with Andy

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When the last box of this memory is destroyed, ignore the action text on the memory card. Instead, Coyote destroys a memory out of their hand by writing in a False Memory, and the text

This Memory cannot be destroyed by the player that owns it

What your Lego castle looked like when it was finished

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When the last box of this memory is destroyed, ignore the action text on the memory card. Instead, Coyote destroys a memory out of their hand by writing in a False Memory, and the text

This Memory cannot be destroyed by the player that owns it

What your Neighborhood looked like from the back of a bike

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Mimic

How long it took to get past being heart-broken over your first girlfriend

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When the last box of this memory is destroyed, ignore the action text on the memory card. Instead, mimic can perform any Trigger that's been performed by another character.

How it Felt when your Stepfather used the belt

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When the last box of this memory is destroyed, ignore the action text on the memory card. Instead, mimic can perform any Trigger that's been performed by another character.

What your Lego Castle looked like when it was finished

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How hard you worked at your first job with Andy

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What your Neighborhood looked like from the back of a bike

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What your stepfather said when you hit him back for the first time

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How it felt to buy your first car

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Your mother crying when you told her you joined The War as a combat medic

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Lantern Bearer

Your wife's name

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When the last box of this memory is destroyed, ignore the action text on the memory card. Instead, Lantern Bearer may destroy 2 cards out of each opponent's hand

Making love to your wife for the first time

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When the last box of this memory is destroyed, ignore the action text on the memory card. Instead, Lantern Bearer may destroy 2 cards out of each opponent's hand

The look on the face of the woman you accidentally shot during the war

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How long it took to get past being heart-broken over your first girlfriend

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What your stepfather said when you hit him back for the first time

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The affair you had with the nurse at the office

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The name of your second Daughter, who was born healthy

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How it Felt when your Stepfather used the belt

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Doctor

This role should be played by the player who knows the most about the game. The Doctor should encourage discussion, but refrain from conversation. Until he loses his first box, the Doctor may destroy two memories per turn.

The Doctor should try to destroy their own character as quickly as they can.

The Last words your wife spoke to you as she died

When this memory is destroyed, ignore the action text on the memory card. Instead, Doctor may use a single piece of tape to repair one destroyed memory, and place it in his hand

Being forgiven for having an affair

When this memory is destroyed, ignore the action text on the memory card. Instead, Doctor may use a single piece of tape to repair one destroyed memory, and place it in his hand

How Falling in Love with your wife Felt Safe

Your Daughter's first Science Project

A Patient who was genuinely helped because of care you provided

The affair you had with the nurse at the office

The name of your second Daughter, who was born healthy

How it Felt when your Stepfather used the belt

Helping your wife write her first novel

A wonderful gift you received from your wife

How it felt when your Stepfather used the paddle

When this memory is destroyed tell the group about discipline you received as a child. Take a random memory out of an opponent's hand. Destroy it without performing any actions listed on the cards.

Playing Cops and Robbers with Andy

When this memory is destroyed tell the group about an imagination game you played as a child.

Take a memory card out of your hand and destroy it. Instead of tearing it, write in a False Memory, and the text: ***This Memory cannot be destroyed by the player that owns it***

How it felt when your Stepfather used the paddle

When this memory is destroyed tell the group about discipline you received as a child. Take a random memory out of an opponent's hand. Destroy it without performing any actions listed on the cards.

What your Lego Castle looked like when it was finished

When this memory is destroyed tell the group about one of the accomplishments you remember bring proud of as a child?

How it felt when your Stepfather used the paddle

When this memory is destroyed tell the group about discipline you received as a child. Take a random memory out of an opponent's hand. Destroy it without performing any actions listed on the cards.

What your Lego Castle looked like when it was finished

When this memory is destroyed tell the group about one of the accomplishments you remember bring proud of as a child?

How it felt to be held by your Mother

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group one of your earliest memories
Take a random memory out of an opponent's hand. Destroy it without performing any actions listed on the cards.

Your Daughter's first science project

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about something you've taught someone else how to do.

Take a card out of your hand, and give it to another player.

How it felt to be held by your Mother

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group one of your earliest memories
Take a random memory out of an opponent's hand. Destroy it without performing any actions listed on the cards.

How it felt to be held by your Mother

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group one of your earliest memories
Take a random memory out of an opponent's hand. Destroy it without performing any actions listed on the cards.

How long it took to get past being broken hearted over your first girlfriend

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a time you were heartbroken

Take a random memory out of an opponent's hand. Destroy it without performing any actions listed on the cards.

How long it took to get past being broken hearted over your first girlfriend

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a time you were heartbroken

Take a random memory out of an opponent's hand. Destroy it without performing any actions listed on the cards.

What your stepfather said when you hit him back for the first time

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a time you stood up for yourself as a child or teenager.

Take 2 random cards out of an opponent's hand, and add it to your own.

What your stepfather said when you hit him back for the first time

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a time you stood up for yourself as a child or teenager.

Take 2 random cards out of an opponent's hand, and add it to your own.

Your mother crying when you told her you joined the Army as a Combat Medic

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a time you hurt someone's feelings while trying to do the right thing.

How awkward it felt to come home from the war, and have strangers call you a hero.

When this memory is destroyed, end your turn. During the next player's turn, draw a picture of frustration.

Your wife's name

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group one thing you never want to forget

Take 2 random memories out of an opponent's hand. Destroy them without performing any actions listed on the cards.

Your wife's name

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group one thing you never want to forget

Take 2 random memories out of an opponent's hand. Destroy them without performing any actions listed on the cards.

The name of your second Daughter, who was born healthy

What was the most important thing to you five years ago?

Take a random card out of an opponent's hand, and add it to your own.

Being forgiven for having an affair

When this memory is destroyed, forgive one of your opponents players for something they've done during this game. Take a random memory out of each opponent's hand. Destroy them without performing any actions listed on the cards.

The affair you had with the nurse at the office

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about regret from your childhood

Take 3 random cards from your opponents' hands.

Helping your wife write her first novel

When this memory is destroyed, pass play to the next player. During their turn, write a short poem.

A wonderful gift you received from your wife

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a good gift you've given.

Take a card from another player's hand.

Making love to your wife for the first time

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a memory that's precious to you. Using a single piece of tape, repair a single destroyed memory, and place it in your hand.

A patient who was genuinely helped by medical care you provided

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about your most rewarding good deed

Take 2 cards from another player's hand

Making love to your wife for the first time

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a memory that's precious to you. Using a single piece of tape, repair a single destroyed memory, and place it in your hand.

The last words your wife spoke to you as she died

When this memory is destroyed, whisper a secret to another player.

Destroy a second memory out of your hand. Do not take any actions listed on the card.

How it felt to buy your first Car

When this memory is destroyed tell the group about one of the accomplishments you remember bring proud of as a teenager?

How it felt to be lost at the Mall

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a time you got lost as a child

Being suspended for fighting at school

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a time you got into trouble as a child or teenager
Draw 2 cards from the Memory Deck

How falling in love with your wife felt safe

Take 2 random memories out of an opponent's hand. Destroy them without performing any actions listed on the cards.

How it felt to see your first patient die

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a time you learned from making a mistake.
Take 2 cards from another player's hand

How falling in love with your wife felt safe

Take 2 random memories out of an opponent's hand. Destroy them without performing any actions listed on the cards.

What you were afraid of when you were first diagnosed

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about something you used to be afraid of, but no longer are

How difficult it was to complete medical school.

When this memory is destroyed, pass play to the next player. During their turn, draw a picture of victory.

Learning that your daughter was moving you into a senior home without discussing it with you

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about something that made you feel powerless as a teenager or child.
Draw 2 cards from the Memory Deck

What Andy said to you when you told him you were going to propose to your wife

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a piece of advice you gave that you really meant.

The name of your first daughter, who died during childbirth

Take 2 random memories out of an opponent's hand. Destroy them without performing any actions listed on the cards.

What your wife said that made you certain she would leave you if you ever struck your daughter again

When this memory is destroyed, pass play to the next player. During their turn, write a short poem about violence

The best night you ever had drinking with Andy

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group something awesome that you've done with friends

Deciding with your wife that your marriage was worth saving

Draw 3 cards from the memory deck

Watching your daughter in a supporting role in a school play, and thinking she was not very good

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about something you've tried to do, but are not very good at.

How proud you were when your daughter was awarded a scholarship to a college

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about a loved one's achievement that you're proud of.

Secretly buying 100 copies of your wife's novel under different names

Take 3 random cards from your opponents' hands.

Being disappointed that your daughter chose to elope, without ever introducing her husband

When this memory is destroyed, tell the group about something unfair that happened to you.

Draw 2 cards from the Memory Deck

Caring for your wife while she was ill

When this memory is destroyed, pass play to the next player. During their turn, write a short poem about being dependent.