



In the eyes of the Lord, we are all either angels or insects. We are either those who have risen above the tribulations of humanity, or those who wallow in them. We are either those who are the wheat or those who are the chaff.

This is about the latter.

HEKx001

(just) a game by jason l blair

# insects

**OF GOD**

"I hope you realize we're about to destroy a life."

"Realize? I'm counting on it."

Or, respectfully yours

## LIFE SPAN.

This game is set in the worst and last night of a person's life. This person has less than five hours to live, and a game session cannot last any longer than that. The game session is played in real time. One minute of game time is one minute of this person's life that has just ticked away.

If the players sit around joking and carrying on for a half-hour, the person does not get that time back. Get an egg-timer, set the countdown on the microwave, or tell your mom to call you after The Tonight Show—just don't let the game clock go longer than five hours. If the person's life has not yet drawn to a close in the game within five hours, the person dies immediately. They may be tagged by a drive-by, struck by a bolt of lightning, or an embolism may drop them dead on the spot. No matter what: the person will die by the end of the game.

To play this game, you need a group of players and one die of each of the following types: d4, d6, d8, d10, d12. You also need plenty of coins, buttons, chits, or similar tokens. Each player should have scrap paper and a pencil or pen, too.

## GENUS. SPECIES. FAMILIA.

The players play different desires and sins of the person. There is no minimum number of players needed nor is there a maximum. There is also no set list of traits the person has to have. Not all people have anything but negligible levels of a certain emotion or want. Below are some examples of traits a person might have:

Rage, Lust, Addiction, Obsession, Compulsion, Fetish, Phobia, Unfulfilled Need

Each player needs to choose one trait they will have control over. If you have very few players (less than three) then each player may choose two complementary traits that they will control. Every player should then choose an aspect that specifies the trait. This allows multiple players to control different aspects of the same trait. For instance, one player may choose Fetish: Schoolgirl while another player chooses Fetish: Asian Men. Or one player may choose Addiction: Painkillers and another may choose Addiction: Cocaine.

Do these traits all seem negative to you? Good. You are playing

the insects, after all. This is not to say the person does not have good qualities merely that we are not very concerned with them. The traits the players portray are not an exhaustive list of the person's abilities and quirks, just those that may be the person's undoing.

Each player should either memorize her trait or scribble it down on a slip of paper.

For an added challenge, each player can write two traits on slips of paper, fold them, and put them in a hat or cup. Each player would then draw a single slip of paper and portray the trait listed on it. In the case of duplicate traits, whoever drew the duplicate would discard the slip and draw another.

One player should be chosen as the timekeeper while another should be chosen as the secretary. The timekeeper's job is to make sure the game time does not exceed five hours and, when necessary, remind folks whose thoughts have wandered that a person's life is ticking away in front of them. The secretary's job is to write down important notes on the person's final night, such as other people they run into or players they go to, as well as writing down the person's last words. These records can be kept or used as evidence in any court cases that arise from playing this game.

After the traits are notated and timekeeper and secretary chosen, each player receives five tokens. Place a bunch more in the middle or in some communal jar that is easily accessible during play.

## INSECTS AT PLAY.

After each player has her trait and tokens, it is time to play. There is not gamemaster in this game aside from the rules presented here and the ever present clock. Each player is entrusted with allowing for group narrative play, meaning everyone is working toward the same story even though their end goals may differ. The point is to portray the person believably and to take them to their logical, fatal end.

The person who is about to die should not be someone who is lying in the cancer ward awaiting their maker. This person should be ambulant and active and living his life completely unaware of the fact it is about to end. The players should make the person interesting and may take a few minutes before the game begins to draft up the basics--outside of the person's already-defined traits. They can make up a name, a job or career, and the town in which the game will

begin. Don't come up with too much about the person in the beginning; let it come out during play.

Actual play consists of laying out the person's life as it ticks down.

**REMEMBER: The person does not know they are about to die. This is the golden rule of the game.**

Bearing that in mind, the person is probably not going to spend his night finally organizing the cupboards, catching up on correspondence, or making sure everything is in order for his passing. He is going to do whatever he normally does. Of course, as was said in the beginning, this is not only the person's last night on earth but his worst as well--so almost everything is going to go wrong or work against the person. Old debts are going to be called in. An ex-girlfriend is going to give him paternal news. He is going to catch his girlfriend tongue-deep in his mother. This is going to be a bad night. Looks like you picked the right one to peep in on, huh?

The person's life will spiral and end, and you get to dictate how this whole sordid affair is going to play out. Each player has equal say in the person's life. Tokens and dice are used when two or more players each want to direct the person down a different path.

Each player should roll a twelve-sided die at the beginning of the game. Whoever gets the highest number will begin the narrative. This narrative consists of one major decision. It is the first player's job to begin the game with a bang. Use verbs, use present tense. Speak in third-person (this allows for the introduction and manipulation of other characters who may or may not meet the same fate). Begin the narrative with the person's name.

Example: "Nikki is walking down the street to meet Jake. She notices a line of black cars turning into the parking lot near the abandoned warehouse. Jake nods to her, acknowledging her presence as she comes into view. Nikki leans in to kiss him and Jake pulls away. 'Nikki,' he says, 'there's something I have to tell you.'"

At this point, allow the next person to take the narrative. By default, play revolves clockwise through the players. If you like, and your group has a more natural rhythm, you can hand off the narrative to a player of your choosing. Just be sure everyone has had a hand in the narrative before it returns to the initial speaker.

Of course, each player will want to pull the person toward her trait.

That is how you get tokens, and getting tokens is how you win the game. This pull is natural and, to an extent, should be encouraged. The problem comes when the player cannot amicably agree on the course of action (when actions pull more toward one trait than another, for instance). When a person starts a narrative toward a spot that another player doesn't like, the opposing player puts a token down and declares a challenge. (She can simply say "Challenge!" if she wants.) The narrating player can then concede and hand the narrative over or she can accept the other player's challenge.

Challenges are resolved one of two ways:

**Majority Opinion:** This method of resolution is simple. A quick vote amongst the player will direct the course of action. A poll is taken and the majority opinion wins. In case of a tie, see below.

**Luck:** This is used when the vote is tied or the conflicting players opt to let a die dictate the event. The die to be rolled begins as a d4 and is put forth by the player being challenged. It may be raised by the opposing player at the cost of two tokens per die type. So, it would cost two tokens to raise it to a d6, four to make it a d8, etc. The player who was narrating (and who accepted the challenge) gets to choose one number within the range of that die (1-4 for a d4, for instance). That person may buy other numbers at the cost of one token per number. If the original player buys all the numbers on the die, the challenger may up the die type by spending the appropriate number of tokens. This give and take does on until one of the players is willing to let the matter rest.

After the numbers are noted, the challenging player rolls the die. If the number that comes up is one of the numbers the narrating player chose, the narrating player retains control. If it is not one of those numbers, the challenger takes control of the narrative beginning right before the action that was challenged.

**No matter what the result is, all token that were bid are lost. That includes the initial token put forth as part of the original challenge.**

## FERTILIZATION.

Tokens are awarded every time a player's trait into play. For example: If the person indulges in his love of hentai, the player who has Fetish: Animated Porn would get a token. If the person watches three tapes of hentai back-to-back, the player does not get extra tokens. A player only gets tokens for each separate instance the

person indulges or sates a particular trait. If a player's trait is part of the person's death, that player gets five extra tokens. Alternately, if a player is controlling more than on trait, that player gets a token for every time either of the traits comes into play.

Whoever has the most tokens at the end wins. In case of a tied score, all players who tied win.

## LETTING THE INSECTS GO.

Any player who has amassed ten or more tokens may cash ten tokens in and kill the person outright. The person will abruptly meet his end, usually through some random act of senseless violence. This immediately ends the game and the player who calls it is down ten tokens. The five death-related tokens are not awarded. Instead, whoever has the most tokens right then and there wins.

(just) a game by jason l blair



**insects**  
**OF GOD**

"What you've done is an abomination, disgusting."

"No more disgusting than what God does every day."

Or, respectfully yours

We are the insects of God. Forgotten, condemned, and forever out of the light, we scuttle belly-down against the soil, forever afraid, just waiting to die.

This is (just) a game.

*Insects of God or, respectfully yours* was written and designed by Jason L Blair.

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