ALICE IS MISSING

A SILENT ROLE PLAYING GAME

RULEBOOK

CONTENT & TRIGGER WARNINGS

ALICE IS MISSING inherently deals with topics of lack of agency, death, grief, helplessness, loss, tense family dynamics, and violence. Player discretion is advised.

This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to real life events is purely coincidental.

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A SILENT ROLE PLAYING GAME

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OVERVIEW

ALICE IS MISSING is a silent role playing game about the disappearance of Alice Briarwood, a high school junior in the sleepy Northern California town of Silent Falls. During the game, players use their phones to send text messages to each other as they unearth clues about what happened to Alice.

The game runs over a single session of two to three hours. There is no formal game master, but one player will need to explain and facilitate the rules. In the first 45 minutes, players create their characters, their relationships to Alice, and their ties with each other. The next 90 minutes follow the characters' text message conversations as they uncover Alice's fate.

TOP:
Introduction, Suspect,
X Card, Character, Motive

BOTTOM:
Searching, Location,
Clue, Debrief

MATERIALS

Some of these supplies are included in the game, while others you will need to provide yourself.

Make sure to have phone chargers on hand during the game in case any player's battery runs dry.

YOU'LL NEED TO GATHER…
- 3-5 Players
- A Quiet, Dimly Lit Room
- Cellphones (each player should have their own)
- A Computer
- ALICE IS MISSING Cards (separated by type)

AND PRINT OUT…
- Character Sheets
- Missing Person Posters
- A Game Guide

Print-outs available for download at
www.aliceismissingrpg.com
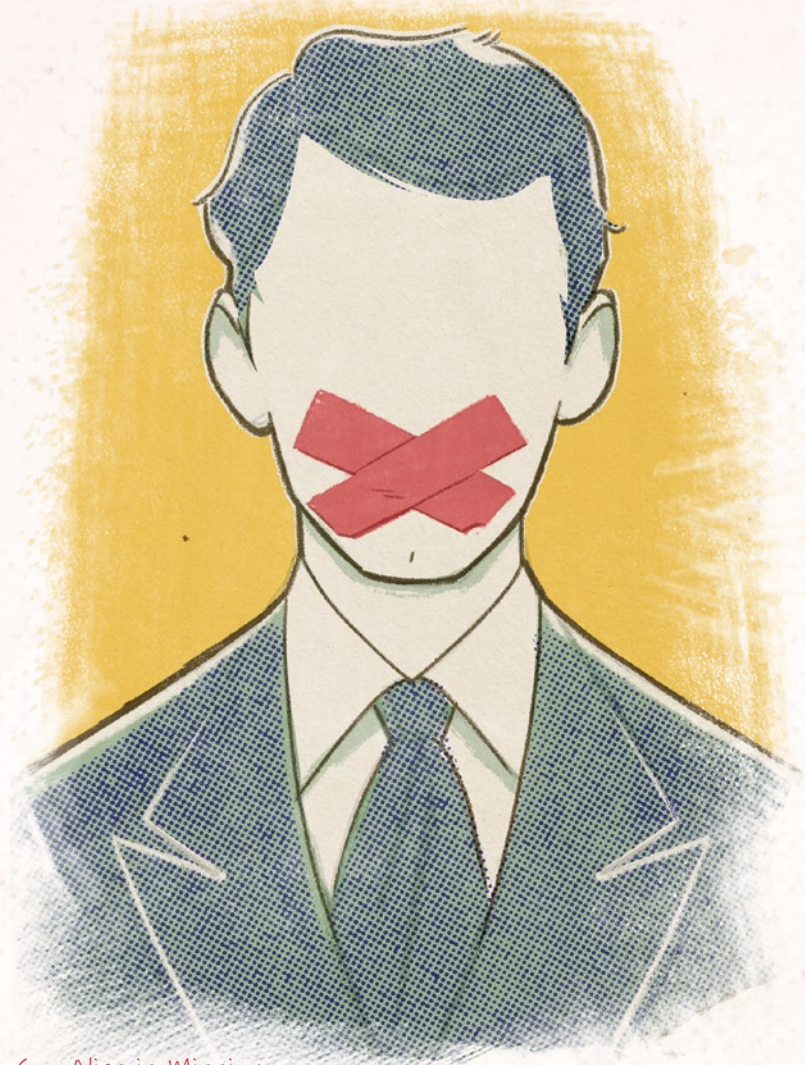
FACILITATING THE GAME

Though the game does not have a game master, one player should have a thorough understanding of the rules in this book. This person, called the facilitator, should refer to the Facilitator Guide (page 23) when explaining the game to the other players. The facilitator also takes on the role of Charlie Barnes and knows the following background information about them before play begins.

CHARLIE BARNES moved away from Silent Falls with their mom at the end of the last school year after their parents divorced. They just arrived in town to stay with their dad for winter break, and hope to see Alice and the others while they're here. A few days ago, Alice stopped responding. They haven't heard from her since.

GAME STYLE

Excluding the game setup, ALICE IS MISSING is played live without verbal communication. Players inhabit their character for the entirety of the 90 minute play session. Instead of speaking out loud to one another, you'll send text messages back and forth to the other characters in a group chat, as well as individually, as though they aren't in the same place as you.

ALICE IS MISSING is a one-shot, event-style game. You won't get together every week to play out a continuation of the story you told the week before. Instead, you'll sit down with the other players for about three hours and explore this story together from beginning to end. After that, your group will say goodbye to these particular characters forever. Though you may certainly swap roles, shuffle cards, and play again with the same set of players, it's not the recommended way to play. The same group will see opportunities where they didn't before, but getting together a new group to play is likely to take the story in directions you didn't previously explore.

The game is fully cooperative and encourages sharing information between characters. This will sometimes put characters at odds with each other, but exploring the tension between characters is an important part of the game. Finding Alice will always be the thing that brings you together at the end.

Players should be ready to make things up on the fly, lean hard into their drives, and look for ways to make the narrative more interesting for everyone.

SAFETY TOOLS

Because of its immersive nature and dark theme, games of ALICE IS MISSING can sometimes get into heavy or difficult content. The following safety tools are recommended, but you may use others if they better suit your group.

X-card: You may use the X-card to remove any piece of content from the game. Since Alice Is Missing plays over text messages, you may send an (X) to the chat to signify you want something removed from the game, or (X: content) to specify what it is you need removed. The player who introduced the content should delete their message (if possible), and the game may continue. No one may challenge a decision to (X) a piece of content. If someone uses an (X) and it isn't clear what needs to be removed, the facilitator should ask them to specify out of character (in parentheses).

It's possible someone may be unable to type (X), or the chat moves so fast an (X) is overlooked. You may also X-card verbally (by saying "X-card: content") to remove content. Although it's preferable that players do not speak, their well-being always comes before the game.

Lines and Veils: You are also encouraged to use a safety tool called Lines and Veils. Before the game starts, ask players if there is content they would like to Line (meaning it will not come up at all in the game). Next, ask them if there is content they would like to Veil (meaning it may come up, but it will never be in focus)—ostensibly veiling it from play. As an example, a player might have a phobia of spiders and call for a Line or a Veil on them in the game. A Line on spiders would mean we should see no spiders, cobwebs, or anything with a spidery appearance. A Veil on spiders would mean we might stumble through cobwebs, but we shouldn't describe the legs, many eyes, or fangs of the spider living in there.

Open door policy: Remind players that they may leave the game at any time. Ideally, they should tell the facilitator if they decide to leave, but it's okay if they cannot. If a player leaves the game, the facilitator should privately message them to see if they are okay. Usually, the game can continue if a player departs—distribute their Clue Cards, keep playing, and invite that player to debrief when the game ends. Sometimes, the game needs to stop, and that's okay. People are more important than the game.

GENDER AND SEXUALITY

ALICE IS MISSING deals with very real-world scenarios, even though it's a game of fiction. The circumstances around missing women often involve violence, sexual violence, date rape, teenager-adult relationships, partner abuse, problems at home, victim blaming, and death. Some of these topics may touch upon players' lived experiences, so setting expectations and boundaries is perhaps the most important part of game setup.

Lines and Veils can help establish players' comfort levels around these topics before the game begins. The following Veils are suggested as a starting point, but you may Line or adjust them to suit your group.

- **Veil gore and violence:** Avoid describing in detail any harm done to Alice.
- **Veil sexual non-consent:** If it is not lined completely, veil sexual non-consent. This includes drugging, coercion, physical force, and threats.
- **Veil victim blaming:** Characters may express upset toward Alice and her actions. However, her actions do not mean she deserves anything that happened to her.

In fiction, stories of missing women often reduce a vulnerable person to a two-dimensional tool that explores the hurt felt by those who know her. ALICE IS MISSING uses character creation and its mechanics to mitigate the tropes that would reduce Alice to a plot tool. It focuses on the network of relationships around Alice and the impact of her disappearance on the wider community— investigating the realities of a missing person in a small town. However, your group may change Alice's name and pronouns if you wish.

Finally, this game includes queer characters connected to Alice who may or may not be out. Players can discuss and decide their character's sexuality and openness during character creation. However, you should also discuss the group's comfort around homophobia and outing other people without their consent.

PLAYER PRIVACY

ALICE IS MISSING uses text messaging on phones as its primary tool for communicating during the game. The game therefore requires players to exchange phone numbers so they can engage in group chats and private chats. If your players are friends in the same area, this shouldn't be a problem (as it's likely you all have each other's numbers already).

However, if you are playing at a con or with a friend from overseas, text messaging may be unsafe or impractical. If text messaging would cause your group problems, you can refer to the guide for online games. You'll still play on your phones in the same room, just with a different messaging platform.

INTRODUCTIONS & CHARACTERS

When everyone is at the table, the facilitator should go over the content warnings and walk the players through your safety tools. Once everyone is on the same page, the facilitator then reads the Introduction Card aloud and randomly chooses one of the Missing Person posters. They then place the Character Cards on the table, and take Charlie Barnes for themselves. Each other player picks the character they want to play and places that Character Card in front of them. Put any leftover characters back in the box (they won't be used in this game). Players can start thinking about the Background and Secret on their card (but should not share their answers with the table yet).

Next, randomly pass Drive Cards out to each player. Place any leftover cards back in the box (they won't be used in this game). Everyone then takes a moment to think about how their Motive impacts their character.

Starting with Charlie Barnes and moving clockwise, players then introduce their character's name and pronouns, their relationship to Alice, a physical description of their character, and their character's Background prompt. Do not share the other prompts yet.

The next four sections go through each step of setting up the game.

The facilitator should read these sections to prepare for the game. However, when everyone is seated at the table, they should use the Facilitator Guide starting on page 23 to introduce the rules and game pieces.

How secret should I keep hidden information?

Try to hold onto your Secrets so you can reveal them during play. However, some hidden information may need to come out during character creation. Assume that characters know no hidden information unless otherwise agreed with other players. For example, Julia's (the Secret Girlfriend) relationship is likely to come up during character creation. By default, no characters should know about her and Alice being together, but when assigning relationships to each other, that knowledge can change based on the prompts you choose to assign. Players may also discuss who may or may not know about the relationship outside of these established relationships as well. Once play begins, put aside the things you know as a player and focus on the character and their perspective.

RELATIONSHIPS, VOICEMAILS, & CHAT SETUP

Next, players discuss their relationship prompts and assign those relationships to the other characters at the table. The basic relationships are open knowledge, but players are free to discuss further information in private if they prefer.

After assigning relationships, players exchange phone numbers (if they don't have them already). Everyone must change the other players' names in their contacts to the name of that player's character instead. Using the character name provides a more immersive experience and makes it easier to follow the text conversations. Though it may be tempting to not re-name your contacts, do it. This aspect is vital to the game's experience and should not be skipped.

The facilitator should now open a voice recording app on their phone. Each player, beginning with Charlie Barnes, records the last voicemail they left Alice before they knew she was missing on the facilitator's phone. The person playing Charlie Barnes should step into somewhere private, record a voicemail to Alice based on their character prompts, and then return to the room where they pass the phone on to another player, and so on. This message should refer or allude to their character's secret. Save these voicemails, as they will be played out loud to the group at the end of the game.
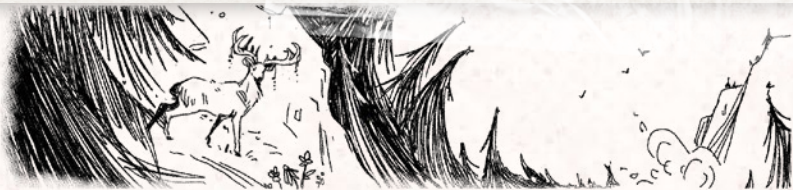
TABLE, TIMER, & MUSIC

While players record their messages, everyone else should help set up the remainder of the game. Someone needs to:

- Shuffle all of the Suspect Cards and Location Cards separately, and place them face down in their respective piles within reach of all players.
- Set up a computer or television where everyone can see it, and pull up the ALICE IS MISSING playlist at www.aliceismissingrpg.com.
- Pause the playlist once it loads—this is your soundtrack and game timer that tells people when to flip their Clue Cards.

Check that the computer is plugged in, set the screensaver timer for a couple of hours (so the computer does not go to sleep during the game), and make the video full screen.

CLUE CARDS & STARTING HUNCHES

Holding all of the Clue Cards face down, hand the 90 minute Clue Card to the person playing Charlie Barnes, and randomly place a 10 minute Clue Card face down in the middle of the table. Randomly take one of each Clue Card between 80 and 20—these cards form the Clue deck for your game (you should have nine cards total). Then, pass these out clockwise around the table until they're all distributed. All players now have between two and four Clue Cards in front of them (it's okay if some players have more cards than others). These should stay face down until the table timer reaches the number on the back of the card. Do not flip them over before this.

Clue cards   Suspect Cards   Location Cards

REVEAL A SUSPECT CARD

8

This person messages you on social media telling you ...cretive ...ves ...up.

Shuffle the face-up Suspect Cards and reveal one.

THEY ARE THE CULPRIT

Place the rest of the Suspect Cards on top of the Suspect Deck.

You find out police know this person is responsible for Alice's disappearance and are now searching for them.

What evidence do the police say they found in the culprit's home that makes it clear they are responsible?

C. J. WALLACE
CREEPER

BRIA BROWN
BULLY

KALISTO RIVERS STATE PARK

...SE ON THE
...A CLIFFS

If a player ends up with two Clue Cards within 10 minutes of each other (such as the 40 and 50 Clue Cards), they should switch clues with someone else until they don't.

Then, lay out one copy of each of the five different Suspect and Location Cards on the table. The suspect row should contain Bria Brown, CJ Wallace, Mr. Halvert, Ryan Groggins, and David Nelson, and the location row should contain Kalisto Rivers State Park, The Dripping Dagger Nightclub, The Old Barn on Cambridge Street, The Lighthouse on The Howling Sea Cliffs, and the Silent Falls Train Station.

Take turns choosing a card from these groups and describing why that suspect or location is suspicious in relation to Alice's disappearance. Once all of these cards have been taken, the facilitator collects them and shuffles them back into their respective decks and places them in the middle of the table. When players draw Suspect or Location Cards during the game, they'll lay them out face up in a row in front of these decks.

Place the Searching Cards on the table within easy reach of all players. If a player decides to investigate one of the locations without being prompted by a Clue Card, they may draw a Searching Card to discover the interesting thing they find when they get there.

Players will now take a short break, get some water, and finish any last minute character work they want to do before things get started.

When everyone is ready to begin, read the Game Guide aloud. The Game Guide provides a summary of what players ought to keep in mind while in character. Leave the Game Guide on the table in case players need to review it during play. Draw particular attention to the notes about characters not going to the same place together and the day that Alice went missing.

The Suspect and Location decks should contain a copy of each card. Make sure each deck has a total of 10 cards, and that each card has a duplicate.

GAME GUIDE

Today is Saturday, the first day of winter break. Everybody except for Charlie starts the game knowing Alice was last seen on Wednesday, 3 days ago.

Players may use parentheses (like this) to communicate anything out of character during the game.

If somebody says something you want removed from the game, you can reply with an (X) or (X: content) to signify it has been X-carded.

It's okay to have moments where nothing happens. Silence can and will occur during the game. When the group chat goes quiet, consider initiating private conversations with other characters.

Two characters can never be in the same place at once. If they would be, create a reason in the narrative for them to never meet.

It's okay if it takes you several minutes to answer your Clue Card. Try to share it before the next Clue Card is turned over. If you can't, just convey it at the next opportune moment.

The Game Guide is a summary text read to the players before the game begins. It contains important points players need to know when playing the game. However, it doesn't contain every rule. The Facilitator Guide on page 23 provides a full rules explanation, along with a script you can read to the players.

Make sure you tell everyone the information from your Clue Card. The answer to your Clue Card question will determine how the game's narrative evolves.

After these 90 minutes, we'll be leaving our characters behind forever. Because of this, you'll want to find a way to reveal your secret to at least one other person, if not to the whole group, by the end of the game.

You should investigate and speculate based on the clues you receive, but you will not find the information that actually leads you to Alice until you hit a certain Clue Card trigger.

You won't find Alice's cell phone or car unless you draw a card stating that you found it.

Leave the Suspect and Location Cards you reveal face up by their respective decks.

If for any reason your character is hurt or killed and can't text for the rest of the game, you can give anyone heading to your location information about what state they find you in using a direct private message. If this comes up in play, the card that triggered it will tell you what to do.

When the timer hits 0, players may write one last in-character message before the game ends.

PLAYING THE GAME

When everybody is ready for the game to begin, the facilitator starts the ALICE IS MISSING playlist and sets the sound to an appropriate level. There will be a few minutes before anything happens for most players, so they should feel free to review their notes or close their eyes and relax. During this time, players may also grab their cards and find a place to get comfortable. Just make sure you're at the table when it's time to flip your Clue Card. Once the timer begins, players should not verbally talk until the end of the game, unless absolutely necessary.

When the timer starts, Charlie Barnes turns over their Clue Card immediately and follows the prompt. Shortly after, Charlie begins the game with a group text message to everyone.

After Charlie sends the first text message of the game, everyone else may join the conversation. There may be flurries of texting during the game, and things might get confusing as to who is responding to what. Other times, there may be a lull in the conversation where nothing happens. Embrace these moments as a realistic part of the ebb and flow of group messages.

Players may communicate out of character by putting their message in parentheses (like this). Players are encouraged to use both the main group chat and individual text messages during the game.

Time is also fluid in the game, so driving somewhere might take you 5 minutes instead of 20, and that's fine. Though you're playing the game for 90 minutes, the text messages could have been over the course of a day or more.

Whenever the timer reaches the time indicated on the back of a Clue Card, it is considered triggered. When a Clue Card is triggered, the player who controls that card flips it over and follows its directions. Often this involves drawing a Suspect or Location Card and incorporating it into the Clue Card prompt. The player should organically work this new information into the group conversation. Once that's done, the player should place the Suspect or Location Card face up on the table next to its deck. The 30 and 20 minute cards direct the player to shuffle the revealed Location or Suspect Cards and draw one randomly. The 10 minute card does not require a card pull, and instead determines how the players find Alice.

ENDING THE GAME

When the timer goes off, players may send one last in-character text message. The facilitator then flips over the Debrief Card and follows its directions to end the game.

FACILITATOR GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Running ALICE IS MISSING as a facilitator isn't much different from the regular experience as a player, except that you will be the one to explain the rules, prepare the cards, clarify any confusion during the game, and keep things on track when necessary. The facilitator should therefore have a thorough understanding of the game and its rules.

The Facilitator Guide provides practical steps for introducing the game and its rules. It covers the same rules detailed up to this point, but in a way that makes them easy to explain to your players. However, you may still hit some stumbling blocks if this is your first time playing ALICE IS MISSING. That's okay! Just make your best judgment call and continue moving forward.

CONTENT WARNINGS

ALICE IS MISSING provides players with an intense and emotionally immersive experience, but it should not come at the cost of another player's safety and well-being. Before organizing a game of ALICE IS MISSING, tell your potential players about the content that may come up during the session. This game touches upon difficult topics that can be triggering. You can use any variation on the message below to give everyone an appropriate warning before they agree to play.

Just a heads up, this game inherently deals with a missing teenage girl in a small town, and all of the topics that can arise when that happens. Our characters will be the people closest to her attempting

to unravel the mystery behind her disappearance. Because of this, themes like tense family dynamics, grief, death, violence, jealousy, and helplessness can and often do come up during the game.

If this sounds like something you might be sensitive to or triggered by, please don't hesitate to let me know—even if this is something you only realize during play —your safety and well-being are always more important than the game.

If any of your players indicate that they may be affected by these themes, ask them if there's something specific that could be avoided or mitigated using safety tools, or if it is best for them to sit this one out.

Lastly, if you don't want to include the "You Find Alice's Body" card as a possible ending to the game, you are encouraged to remove it from the 10 Minute Deck. The game will still function perfectly well without it.

SETTING UP THE GAME

This section goes through how to explain the game to the other players once you're at the table. Any time you see text *italicized like this*, it means you should read it to the other players. Let's get started!

Before the players arrive, grab a small flashlight or lamp and put this out of sight from the others for now, if you can. If the lights go out during a game (which can be triggered by one of the 45 minute cards), you'll want to place this on the

table so that players can still see what they're doing. Then place all of the cards in their respective piles on the table and Character Records within easy reach. Stack the Missing Person posters in a pile face down, and position the Game Guide off to the side. Lastly, put the X-card in the middle of the table. You're now ready for your players to arrive.

When everyone is seated at the table and ready to begin, read the following paragraphs aloud.

ALICE IS MISSING is a silent role playing game about the disappearance of Alice Briarwood, a high school junior in the sleepy Northern California town of Silent Falls. During the game, we'll use our phones to send text messages to each other as we unearth clues in an attempt to discover what happened to Alice.

An important reminder before we begin. This game inherently deals with topics like missing children, tense family dynamics, grief, death, violence, and helplessness. If any of those things present a particular trigger or difficulty with anyone and we haven't spoken about it already, please let me know either here or privately so we are mindful of it during play.

Otherwise, we will use a tool called the X-card as a safety mechanic during play. If any content comes up that you aren't comfortable exploring as a player, you may send an (X) or (X: content) in the chat to indicate what you'd like removed from the game. If you can't send a message or the conversation is moving too quickly, you may say

"X-card" and verbally name the thing you want changed. There should be no explanation needed, we will just pivot away from that topic.

We're also going to use a safety mechanic called Lines and Veils. This is a way for you to flag topics ahead of time that you're uncomfortable exploring to make sure we don't stray into dangerous territory. Lines are things you do not want to see in the game at all. Veils are things you don't mind seeing in the game, so long as we avoid exploring the content in detail. The game suggests to Veil the following, although we can Line or amend these Veils to suit our game:

GORE AND VIOLENCE. *Avoid describing in detail any harm done to Alice.*
SEXUAL NON-CONSENT. *If it is not lined completely, veil sexual non-consent. This includes drugging, coercion, physical force, and threats.*
VICTIM BLAMING. *Characters may express upset toward Alice and her actions. However, her actions do not mean she deserves anything that happened to her.*

WOULD WE LIKE TO ADJUST THESE VEILS? *Are there other situations or topics we'd like to outright avoid? Are there things we're okay including, but want to keep veiled or off-screen if it occurs?*

Discuss any of these topics as necessary. Remind players that they may institute a Line or Veil at any time during the game. All they need to do is write (Line: content) or (Veil: content) in the chat—such as (Line: gore) if the conversation feels like it's heading in that direction. Once everyone has had a chance to add something if they wish, continue.

During the next 45 minutes, we will set up our fictional world; who we are, our relationships to Alice and each other, and our town. Then, we're going to spend 90 minutes inhabiting those characters, gathering clues, and texting one another as the story unfolds. I will explain everything as we go, but first I'm going to read the Introduction Card to set the scene for the game.

Now grab the Introduction Card and read the text aloud. That card's information is included below as well.

Silent Falls is a small, coastal forest town in the heart of Northern California. It's quiet here, and since the recession a few years ago, people are not as friendly as they used to be. It's been a rough few years for everyone.

The major high school in town, Franklin Academy, lies nestled in the wooded hills on the east side. It's the last day before winter break, and students shuffle down the hallways, dusting off a light powder of snow from their jackets. It's cold today.

Down the main corridor, past the barren trophy case and peeling Franklin Academy decal plastered on the wall, hangs a bulletin board. A cluster of students are gathered at it, and around the edges we see old posters for student body elections, sign ups for football next year, and reminders about the upcoming senior ball littered about like mousetraps. But as the students part, we land on the flyer they were all huddling around.

Grab the Missing Person posters and spread them out face down. Have another player choose one of the flyers and turn it over. Put the others away—you won't need them for the rest of the game. Then say the following:

This is our Alice. We will learn more about her shortly. But first, let's choose our characters.

Grab the Character Cards and spread them out on the table for everyone to see.

The available characters are Jack Briarwood, the older brother; Dakota Travis, the best friend; Julia North, the secret girlfriend; Evan Holwell, the one with the crush; and Charlie Barnes, the one who moved away. As the facilitator, I will be playing Charlie.

Grab the **CHARLIE BARNES** card and put it in front of you.

Now it's your turn to choose! Which characters stand out as someone you're interested in playing, and are there any characters you would prefer not to play?

Put away the unused Character Cards after everyone has chosen a character. Next, break down the parts of the Character Card, as below.

You'll notice there are a few sections on the Character Cards—I'm going to go over each one.

The first is the Background question.
You'll share that answer with the group
during character creation. But we'll get
to that in a minute.

JACK BRIARWOOD
The Older Brother

Background
Tell us about why you and your sister's home
life has been so difficult these last few years.

SECRET

You and Alice got in a fight over something
serious the day before she vanished.
What was it?

Apologizing for the fight.

VOICEMAIL

The next is the Secret.
Keep this to yourself for
now. However, this secret
should be revealed to at
least one other person
(if not the whole group)
during the game.

Third is the voicemail prompt. We will all record the last
voicemail we left Alice before we knew she was missing.
I will play these voicemails at the end of the game as a
reminder of where we came from. This prompt provides a
jumping off point for that voicemail. **If you can work your
secret into this recording, all the better.** It can make for a
more impactful ending for the game. However, don't worry
about this now, we'll record our voicemails later in the setup.

Then grab the stack of Drive Cards and pass them out randomly to each player face up. Discard any leftovers; you won't need them for the rest of the game.

These cards give us our drive and establish our relationships with one another. You'll combine the drive on this card with the information on your Character Card to create the person you'll inhabit during the game. Take a minute to write down any initial thoughts about your character in the space below their name on your Character Record— their physical description, their favorite class, their home life, etc. You may also start brainstorming ideas for your Background question and Secret. However, your answer may be influenced by other people's responses, so don't get too attached to any idea quite yet. When you're done, could you put your pencil in the middle of the table? That will let us know that we can move on.

Once all pencils are put in the center, begin character introductions and Background questions.

Alright, let's share our characters, including their pronouns, their relationship to Alice, and the answer to our Background question. Do not share your Secret—it should come out in play. Remember to listen to other people's answers, and adjust yours as necessary to fit the fiction they've established. Feel free to ask players additional questions about their character. Make sure to take down any notes you'd like in their section on your Character Record. I'll start with the information specifically about Charlie.

Charlie Barnes moved away from Silent Falls with their mom at the end of the last school year after their parents divorced. They're now returning to stay with their dad for winter break, and are hoping to see Alice and the others while they're here. A few days ago, Alice stopped responding. They haven't heard from her since.

The facilitator should introduce Charlie's pronouns, physical description, relationship with Alice, and any other important information. Then, read the Background question and give your answer. Moving clockwise, each other player should similarly introduce their character.

Great, now that everyone has an idea of who one another is, we're going to assign relationships. Note that all of our characters are friends, or at least were at one time. Nobody should be excluded or feel shut out because they're not "in the group." The game is more engaging if everybody knows each other well, even if you don't necessarily get along.

Look at the two relationships you've been given. You'll assign each of these relationships to another character here. These relationships are usually one sided, meaning that just because you feel that way about a person doesn't mean they necessarily feel that same way back. Sometimes assigning each other dissonant relationships can result in more interesting characters. Who has a relationship that they'd like to start with?

After assigning relationships, you will exchange phone numbers and create your group chat. Pull out your phone and open up a blank text message where people can type their numbers into the "To" line. Then, pass your phone clockwise to the other players.

Alright, let's create our group chat. Once everyone has entered their phone number, I will send out the first message to everyone with my character name. You should all respond on your phones with your character name. You should change those contacts to these character names, so we know who is talking during the game. Don't worry, we will change these back before we leave.

When everyone has added their phone number in the "To" line, type "Charlie Barnes" in the message and send it. Everyone should respond with their character names. Take a minute to change all of their contact names to those character names.

Once this is done, pull up a voice recording app on your phone and make sure all other messages are labeled or deleted (so as not to confuse them with the voicemails you're about to record).

We are going to take a small break. During this break, we will take turns going into another room to record the last voicemail we left Alice before we knew she was missing. Remember to use the prompt on your Character Card and work in any information about your Secret that you can. When you're done, pass the phone off to someone who hasn't

recorded yet. Now is also a good opportunity to grab water or run to the restroom. When you're refreshed and ready to begin the game, come back to the table so we can get started. If you return to the table early, I can use your help setting up the game pieces.

After recording your voicemail, you'll want to set up the remainder of the cards and the game timer. Do so by following the instructions below.

Grab the Location and Suspect decks, pull out one copy of each kind of card, and lay them out on the table in two rows. You should have one row that contains Bria Brown, CJ Wallace, Mr. Halvert, Ryan Groggins, and David Nelson, and another that contains Kalisto Rivers State Park, The Dripping Dagger Nightclub, The Old Barn on Cambridge Street, The Lighthouse on The Howling Sea Cliffs, and the Silent Falls Train Station.
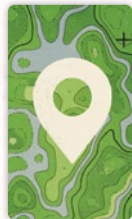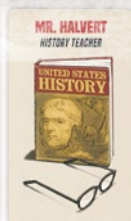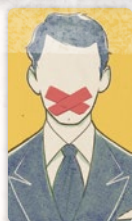
Next, set up your laptop or television with the ALICE IS MISSING playlist, pausing it at 90:00.

Then take the Clue Cards and randomly draw one of each number without looking at them: 90, 80, 70, 60, 50, 45, 40, 35, 30, 20, and 10. Take the 90 minute card for yourself, then pass out the rest of them clockwise around the table until you reach the 10 minute card. Put the 10 minute card in the center of the table. Everyone should now have between two and four Clue Cards, depending on the number of players. Some people may have more than others—that's okay.

60

80

GIVE THIS CARD TO CHARLIE BARNES

70

90

GIVE THIS CARD TO CHARLIE BARNES
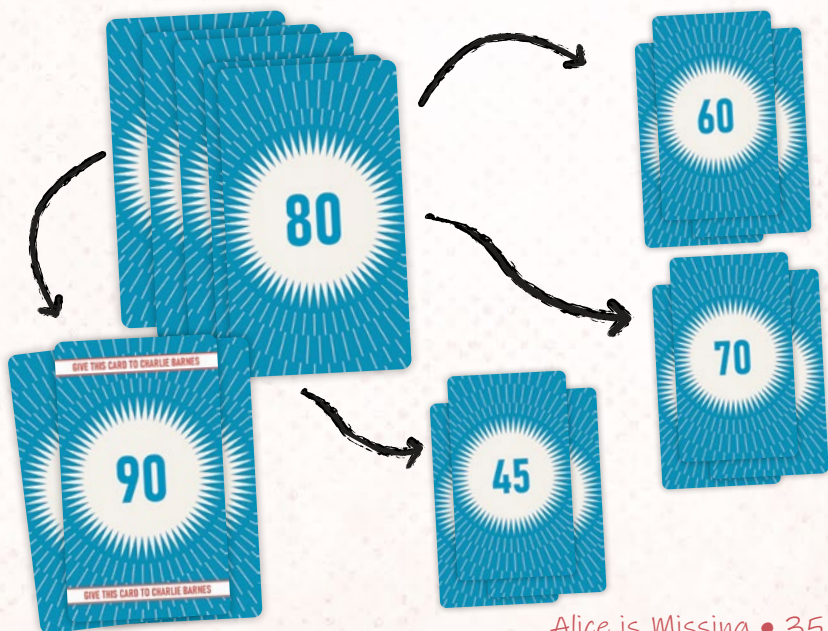
45

When players return from the break, tell them **not** to turn over their Clue Cards. You will explain how they work soon. Once everyone is back, continue with the following paragraphs.

You'll see you now have cards with numbers on the back of them. These are your Clue Cards; make sure to leave them face down—don't worry, we will talk about them soon. But first, we're going to establish our Starting Hunches.

Point to the Location Cards.

These are the Location Cards. They represent the places that Alice could possibly be in our game. We will discover her location by the end of the 90 minutes.

Point to the Suspect Cards.

These are the Suspect Cards. They represent the people we suspect had something to do with Alice's disappearance. By the end of the 90 minutes, we will discover which one of them is the culprit.

You can see all five of each type of card laid out here. The rest of the deck is made up of duplicates of these cards. We're each going to choose from these cards in front of us until they are all gone, and as we do, describe what about them makes us suspicious that they might be involved in Alice's disappearance. You can use the appropriate

spaces on your Character Record to take down notes, if you wish. Does anyone have a person or place that jumps out at them?

As players start taking cards, be sure to follow up with any questions that will help them hone in on a very specific answer. Sometimes players will talk about why it's a suspicious place, but not necessarily tie it back to Alice's disappearance. If this happens, you'll want to ask them how it relates to Alice and why she's missing. Players may also swing the opposite direction, talking about why that place is important to Alice, but not why it's actually suspicious. You'll want to ask probing questions to get them there. Most importantly, don't tie any of these locations or suspects together during this phase, since any suspect and location combination could be the cause of Alice's disappearance

Once all the cards have been taken, collect them again and shuffle them into their respective decks. Once these decks have been shuffled, place them in an area within easy reach of everyone at the table.

Finally, let's talk about your Clue Cards. They move the plot along and are the main mechanic in the game, so it's really important to understand how they work. You'll see I have a timer set up. It's going to count down from 90 minutes to 0. The Clue Cards should remain face down until the timer hits the number on the Clue Card.

Let's do an example to see how Clue Cards work. Say I have the 80 minute card. When the timer hits 80, I will flip this over and read it to myself.

Grab one of the spare 80 minute cards you **didn't** deal out and turn it over, reading the full prompt aloud. Then, continue.

It tells me to flip a Suspect Card, so I'll draw one from the Suspect deck and flip it over onto the table.

Name the suspect it reveals.

I'll now use this suspect to answer the Clue Card's prompt. I'll take a minute to process the information and generate an answer to the question in the blue box. I'll then find a way to organically communicate this information in character to the group chat.

Give an example of this depending on the prompt. If the Suspect Card is Ryan Groggins and the Clue Card is the person who posted something suspicious to social media, it could be: "Guys, did you see Ryan Groggin's instagram? He's been posting pictures of him and Alice every day since Tuesday. But she wasn't missing yet on Tuesday..."

Shuffle this Suspect Card back into the deck.

*Location Cards work the same way. You'll reveal the location and use it as the inspiration for the prompt on your Clue Card. Once you've done this, leave the Suspect or Location Card near the deck—**don't** take it back to your seat with you.*

*At some point in the session, **and this is critical to the way the game plays out**, one of you will get a Clue Card that tells you to shuffle the face-up Suspect or Location Cards on the table and reveal one. This will be the place Alice is found or the suspect who is responsible.*

*One of the Clue Cards will also tell you to give the 10 minute card to someone here. Follow those instructions, and you can always send me a message if you have questions. If you receive the 10 minute card, **do not** flip it over until the timer hits 10.*

Using the Clue, Suspect, and Location Cards is the most mechanically intricate piece of the game, so are there any questions before we continue?

Answer any questions and review any mechanics again if needed. This is sometimes a lot of information at once to process, so don't be afraid to walk through the whole thing again if necessary.

Finally, point to the Searching Cards.

The last deck we're going to talk about are the Searching Cards. Sometimes your Clue Card will tell you to go to a specific location to do or find something. If it does, you should do that. But if you want to go somewhere on your own without a card prompting you to do it, you may travel there and draw a Searching Card. The contents of these cards can really impact the game, so only use them if you feel stuck—like you'll get there and there's nothing for you to do or find without making something up.

So that's where these cards come in. At any time, you may inform the group that you're heading to a location and draw from the Searching Deck to see what you find there. As a reminder, use these opportunities sparingly when things slow down or you want to throw a wrench in the plot. Any questions?

Set the Searching Cards next to the 10 minute card in the center of the table, then grab the Game Guide.

Lastly, we're going to go over the Game Guide, which will sit here at the table in case you ever need to refer to it. Some of these things we've already gone over, but they're on here as a friendly reminder if you forget during the game.

Review the Game Guide with your players line by line, answering any questions

they may have. Once this is done, continue to the paragraph below before getting started.

I know that's a lot of information at once. But the Game Guide will stay on the table for reference at all times, and if you have any questions or confusion, you can always text me out of character.

We are just about ready to start. I'll flip my 90 minute Clue Card as soon as the timer begins, which will have me send the first group text message of the game. You'll have a few minutes before you get that text from me, so feel free to find a space in the room to relax, review your Character Record, and mentally prepare. You might also want to think about what relationships you're most interested in exploring during the game, and who you might want to send your first private message to once play begins.

As a reminder, you only need to be near the table when flipping your Clue Card over, so feel free to spread out. As soon as the music starts, no one should speak for the entire 90 minute period, but you can always message me with anything as it comes up. Does anyone have any last questions before we begin?

When you're ready, begin the timer, set the music to an appropriate level, and flip over your 90 minute card. The game is afoot.

KEEPING THINGS ON TRACK

On top of playing Charlie during the game, the facilitator has the added responsibility of keeping the game on track. The game usually runs itself once the timer begins. But every so often, you'll need to intervene so the game functions as intended. We'll cover a few of the most common things to look out for, and how to best remedy them.

Players miss their Clue Cards. This happens more often than you'd imagine, as players can get into multiple intense conversations and forget to look at the timer. A private message their way with a gentle reminder to flip their Clue Card is usually the best way to handle this

Players do not convey the appropriate information from their Clue Cards. Each Clue Card should point to either a location or suspect alongside some revealing information about Alice's disappearance. If someone flips their Clue Card but doesn't introduce a location or suspect, check in with them out of character to make sure they're working on it. The player might simply be working up to an opportunity to reveal the information, since it can be a lot of pressure to do so organically. This check in should be a gentle reminder so you don't put more pressure on them—assure them they don't need to rush, and that you're just checking if they're working toward incorporating that information into the story.

Players say two things that seem contradictory to one another. In ALICE IS MISSING, players are often asked to create information quickly and with limited guidance. Under these conditions, they may say something that contradicts a

previous discovery about Alice's disappearance. The most appropriate recourse is to figure out, in character, how both statements have truth to them, or how those characters could believe they are both right. If two characters said they were alone with Alice on Wednesday night, perhaps Alice left one character to be with the other and didn't tell either of them about her movements. Memory is fallible, especially under stress, and our perspective is almost always an incomplete picture of reality. If the contradictory statements cannot exist together, you can always reconcile the two in an out-of-character chat, though this should be a last resort.

Players take their Location and Suspect Cards with them when they leave the table. Sometimes players will accidentally bring a Location or Suspect Card back to where they are sitting instead of placing it with the others below their respective decks. If this happens, just ensure they are put back in their proper place before the 30 minute card is flipped and they are due to be shuffled.

The 10 minute card may end up with someone who isn't actually headed to find Alice. This situation occurs rarely, but sometimes a character may make it sound like they are on their way to Alice's location (revealed by the 20 minute card), receive the 10 minute card that tells them how they find Alice when they get there, and then (for whatever reason) decide they actually are not the one who is going to go—that can cause problems for the end of the game. When a character steps forward to actually go find her at the revealed location, make sure the 10 minute card goes to them instead—that way they have the information they need about Alice when they arrive.

DEBRIEF WITH YOUR PLAYERS

When the timer goes off, turn the music down a little bit and play the voicemails on your phone over the top of the final song. If the song ends before the voicemails are done, that's okay. Continue listening to the rest of the voicemails. Once this is done, turn over the Debrief Card on the table and follow its instructions. It will guide you on how to end the game.

Check in with the group to make sure they're feeling okay—regardless of how the game ended. This game can bring about unexpected or difficult feelings, so be mindful of that as you go through the debrief process. Spend as much time as necessary talking about the game, those feelings, and what transpired over the last 90 minutes to help players ground themselves in reality.

PLAYING ONLINE

Playing ALICE IS MISSING virtually over the internet can present its own set of logistical challenges, but the trade-off can result in an even more unique, immersive experience. There are specific walkthroughs for online games of ALICE IS MISSING available at www.aliceismissingrpg.com, but below are some general guidelines to help things move along smoothly.

Most changes to the online format occur before the 90 minutes begins—once the timer starts, the game plays similar to the way it does in-person. The biggest danger you'll run into here is time. Online games can often take a little longer to set up, and because this game requires a significant amount of emotional labor during play, adjusting your setup time can mean the difference between players staying emotionally connected at the climax of the story and them checking out just as the most demanding part of the game ramps up. To help mitigate this problem, you'll want to do the bulk of your character creation before you get together to play. All of the materials needed for this pre-game setup can be found at www.aliceismissingrpg.com.

The first thing you will do is randomly choose a Missing Person poster and send it to the group, letting them know that this is the Alice you will be looking for during your game. You'll then give them their available options for characters using the downloadable Character Cards. As the facilitator, keep the Charlie Barnes card for yourself and only send the other four to them. You may use a variation on the message below when sending, if you'd like.

Once you've chosen a character, let me know who it is, and I'll send you a random Drive to pair with that character to create your personality. You may start brainstorming the answer to your Background prompt (you will share this information with all of us soon) and Secret (this will be private, for now). Your answers might change once you hear others' responses, and that's perfectly okay. Ignore the voicemail prompt for the moment, we'll get to it soon.

When a player claims a Character Card, send them a random Drive Card fairly quickly so they can get into character. After distributing all the Drive Cards, you may use any variation on the message below to continue.

Alright, everyone has received their Drive Card! You can ignore the Relationships area on the card for now. Start creating your character in your head based on the cards you have— personality, physical description, etc. If you would all share the answer to your Background question here at least a few hours before we begin, that will help us keep on track. I'll begin…

You will then provide the answer to your Background question with some level of detail to help set the tone for everyone.

After everyone has shared theirs as well, create the group text (if you aren't using one already), and collect the voicemails. You can use the message below as guidance on what to tell your players.

We are really close to being ready! The last thing we should do before we jump on together is record our voicemails. These are the last voice messages we left Alice before we knew she was missing. Use the voicemail prompt on your Character Card for inspiration, but also incorporate your Secret in some way. It can be direct, subtle, or anywhere in-between. These voicemails will play at the end of the game as the closing moment of our story. Don't worry about changing your voice or doing too much to make you sound different, these messages should be as sincere and grounded as we can make them. Try to keep them under a minute, and send them to me privately when you're done.

I'm also going to create the group text message chain for our game. Please send me your phone number if I don't have it already. Once I have everyone's number, I'll send my character's name to the chain, and all of you should respond with your character's name. Make sure to change your contacts to these names before we begin. After that, we'll be ready to go!

Once you have established your characters and received all of the voicemails (yours included!), you are ready to set up the online platform you're using to play.

Make sure to follow the specific instructions for that platform to ensure the best experience for your players.

INSPIRATION & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ALICE IS MISSING's theme and tone is heavily inspired by the video games *Life Is Strange, Gone Home,* and *Oxenfree*, as well as the movies and TV shows *Searching, Riverdale,* and *Winter's Bone.*

It also draws on many existing role-playing and live-action game systems, including *Fiasco* and *Out of Dodge* by Jason Morningstar, *Unheroes* by Joanna Piancastelli, and *Kids on Bikes* by Doug Levandowski and Jonathan Gilmour.

If you'd like to contact me about the game to share your stories or give me feedback, you can find me @spenserstarke on Twitter. I'd love to hear from you.