

Your Dead Friend

a game for two people by Jeeyon Shim

You are taking a walk with a friend the day before they will die. You know they will die because you keep getting transported back to this day, over and over, and today is the day you decide you're going to give up on trying to divert their fate by warning or dissuading them from what will happen. You are going to savor the time you have and enjoy looking at the trees and the birds with them. You are going to say goodbye.

This game is for two players. Decide which of you is playing the **DREAMER** and which of you is playing the **FRIEND**.


1. Pick at least four questions out of the following list to ask each other and take turns answering as your character, maintaining gentle and steady eye contact throughout each response. The more questions you answer, the fuller your friendship will feel:
 - a. What would constitute a “perfect day” for you?
 - b. What is something you feel grateful for?
 - c. What is your greatest accomplishment to date?
 - d. What is your most treasured memory?
 - e. When did you last sing to someone? To yourself?
 - f. What do you value most in a friendship?
 - g. Make three true “we” statements apiece. For example: “We both are in this room, feeling...”
 - h. What is something you like about your friend?
 - i. What is important for someone to know about you in order for you to feel vulnerable with them?
 - j. What have you dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it yet?
2. Read the poem at the end of this playbook to yourselves, silently. Look up at your co-player once you've finished reading.
3. Decide together how the Friend will die after today. Come up with an **ANCHOR**, a sentence that the Friend will say to initiate play, and to return to in the event of a **REWIND** (e.g. “Hang on, I think there's something in my shoe”).
4. Take three deep, synchronized breaths together, in and out.
5. Friend speaks the **ANCHOR** aloud, initiating play.
6. Go for a walk. If the Dreamer tries to warn their Friend about their death at any point, play **REWINDS** back to the beginning of the walk.
7. Talk about the things you both love, and about inconsequential things. Goof around. Notice and maybe remark on the things you will not be able to share after this day: what the trees look like at this moment in this present season, what the birds seem to be saying to each other, what your footfall sounds like on the ground you walk together, what little plants you can see growing.
8. **When the Dreamer tells their Friend, “I love you,” that signals the end of game.** The Dreamer is the only one to determine when play ends.

How **REWIND** works: Both players will decide on a sentence for the Friend to say that will initiate play (e.g. "Hang on, I think I have something in my shoe"). If the Dreamer decides it is right to try to warn their Friend about their impending death, play the scene out until it feels right for the Friend to say in a firm, neutral tone: "**LOOK BACK.**" The Friend is the only one to determine when to initiate **REWIND**. Both the Dreamer and their Friend will immediately stand facing each other, close their eyes, and take three deep synchronized breaths together again. Once they've done that the Friend will say the initiating sentence once more and both players will open their eyes and resume play. For the Friend, time rewound and started over, and they have no memory of what transpired before the Rewind; the Dreamer remembers everything.

A Meeting In A Part

by Wendell Berry

In a dream I meet
my dead friend. He has,
I know, gone long and far,
and yet he is the same
for the dead are changeless.
They grow no older.
It is I who have changed,
grown strange to what I was.
Yet I, the changed one,
ask: "How you been?"
He grins and looks at me.
"I been eating peaches
off some mighty fine trees."

A person is seen from behind, standing in a field of tall, dry, brown grass. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a dark beanie. The background is a hazy, blue sky with some bare trees visible in the distance. The overall mood is somber and contemplative.

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