

Palace of Mental Hygiene

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Group: Lambda

Ingredients: Palace, Memory, Drug

Blurb:

You had the courage to defy the oppressive government. Now they have your body, but what they really want is your mind. Will you be able to resist, or will you wind up being “rehabilitated” like so many other unfortunates before you.

Introduction:

Officially, the Palace of Mental Hygiene represents the government's dedication to the welfare of its citizens. Officially, it is a place dedicated to helping the mentally ill and the socially mal-adjusted heal and become happy, contributing members of society. Officially, no one is sent there who does not need help. However, now you know the truth. You know that you are not mentally ill. You know that your only social mal-adjustment was daring to question the government's will. You know these things now. The only question is, how long will you be able to remember them.

Game Concept:

In this game you will take on the role of a dissident living under a totalitarian regime. Your character has been captured and sent to the government's so-called "Palace of Mental Hygiene" where you will receive what they call therapy. Others would call it brain washing. The game begins after the initial, intensive brain washing has been completed, when the so-called patients are allowed a modicum of freedom and the ability to interact with each other. Of course, they are so drugged up that interaction is difficult. The beginning of the game finds your character heavily drugged, confused, and thrust into an unfamiliar situation, unsure of himself and the world around him. This is a critical time for your character as it will determine if he is tough enough to withstand the life in the Palace of Mental Hygiene, or if he will fold and become another "rehabilitated" drone, or collapse entirely into a drug-induced coma.

Players: At least 3. 6 or 7 is probably the practical upper limit.

Equipment Needed:

Package of 3x5 Cards
2 Six sided dice
Pencils

Setup:

Take 14 3x5 Cards. The first card will serve as your character sheet. On this card, write the name, sex and age of your character at the top of the card. Then add lines to record your Willpower, Empathy and Drug attributes. Initially, you have six points to distribute between your Willpower and Empathy attributes. You must put at least one point in each attribute, but otherwise you may distribute these as you wish. Your Drug attribute starts at 10.

On the next 12 cards, write the word "Forgotten" in the middle of one side; this will become the back of your memory cards. Take three of these cards & on two of them, write some basic facts about your character. These facts should be something important to your character. For instance:

“I am married to a woman named Rebecca”

“My parents are Jane and Joe Smith”

“I grew up in the town of St. Petersburg.”

These are memories that your character still possesses. On the front of the third and final memory card write the following sentences:

“I don’t belong here! I’M NOT CRAZY!”

Leave the fronts of the rest of your memory cards blank, you will fill these in when your character “remembers” facts during play.

Take one final card and make up a fact about the Palace of Mental Hygiene, the government or just society at large. The fact should be something all the characters would reasonably know. Place this card in the middle of the table. These facts will be available for all players to reference during play. These facts must be consistent. If someone has already placed a fact in the middle of the table which contradicts your fact, you must discard your fact and come up with a new one.

Once everyone has done that, roll the dice to see who goes first. Starting with the person who rolls highest, each player should name another character out loud. Both players will then note the name of the other’s character on their character sheet. Your characters know each other in some way; but they just don’t remember that they know each other. These will be two of the memories that you will try to recover during the game. Continue going around until everyone has the names of two other characters on their character sheet.

You may not choose the same character twice. You also may not choose someone who already has two names on their character sheet.

Attributes:

Willpower: This represents your character’s ability to assert himself. It is his sense of independence and unique identity.

Empathy: This represents your character’s ability to relate to other humans. It is her sense of interconnectedness and community.

Drug: This represents the sway that the numerous psychoactive drugs administered by the Palace staff have over your character.

Drug Resistance Rolls: Most actions in the game require a drug resistance roll to be made. These rolls can either be made using Willpower or Empathy as the relevant attribute. To make a drug resistance roll, roll the dice and add the total to the relevant attribute. If the total exceeds your character’s Drug score, the roll succeeds; if not, it fails.

Play:

Players take turns describing scenes to each other, and use the dice to determine the outcomes of these scenes. There are three types of scenes that a player may choose to describe: Therapy, Free Time, and Riot.

Therapy Scene:

In this scene, your character is speaking to her designated therapist (actually an Interrogator/Brain washer.) These sessions are a regular part of your character's life. During them, the therapist will try to convince your character that he is mentally ill and that they should let the staff at that Palace of Mental Hygiene help him become a normal part of society once again.

Mechanics:

To determine the results of a Therapy Scene, you will make two rolls. The first will be a Drug Resistance roll using Willpower as the relevant attribute. If this succeeds, you get a +2 modifier to the second roll. Furthermore, you get a +1 modifier to the second roll for every memory of yours or fact about the outside world that you can work into the story, up to a limit of +4. With the +2 from the Drug resistance roll, the total possible modifier is +6.

The value of the second roll, with any modifiers is then compared to Table 1 to determine the results of the Therapy Scene.

Table 1: Therapy Scene Results	
Total	Result
2	Your therapist shakes you to the very core. Lose a memory
3	
4	You react violently and are further sedated. Increase Drug Level by 1
5	
6	Your therapist erodes your sense of self. Decrease Willpower by 1
7	
8	
9	You and your therapist spar verbally, but no progress is made.
10	
11	You find you are more able to hold your own in therapy. Increase Willpower by 1
12	
13	
14	You begin to fight through your drug induced haze. Decrease Drug Level by 1
15	
16	
17	You gain new insight into yourself. Recover a Memory
18	

Free Time Scene:

In this type of scene, you and another player tell the story of your characters interacting. In doing so you should remember that your characters activities are being closely monitored by the Palace staff, so narrate accordingly.

Mechanics:

To determine the results of a Free Time Scene, you will make two rolls and the other player will make one. The first roll you will make is a Drug Resistance Roll with Empathy as the relevant attribute. If you succeed, you get a +1 modifier to your second roll. Then, the other player will also make a Drug Resistance Roll using empathy as the

relevant attribute. If she succeeds, you get a +1 modifier to your second roll. Further more, you get a +1 modifier for every memory or fact about the outside world that you or the other player can work into the story, up to a limit of +4. As with the Therapy Scene, a total modifier of +6 is possible.

The value of the second roll, with any modifiers is compared to Table 2 to determine the results of the Free Time Scene.

Table 2: Free Time Scene Results	
Total	Result
2	Your interaction goes very poorly and damages you further. Lose a memory
3	
4	Your interaction turns violent and you are sedated. Increase Drug Level by 1
5	
6	Your interaction goes poorly. Decrease Empathy by 1
7	
8	
9	You are able to interact on a very shallow level. No Change
10	
11	Your interaction leaves you feeling more connected to your fellow inmates. Increase Empathy by 1
12	
13	
14	Your interaction goes well and you begin to fight through your drugged stupor. Decrease Drug Level by 1
15	
16	
17	Talking helps you recall what life used to be like. Recover a Memory
18	

Special Rules about Connections:

Two of your characters twelve memory cards are reserved for remembering your connections to the two other characters named on your character sheet. These memories must be recovered in Free Time Scenes with those characters. If you already have ten memories showing and you gain another memory, either in a Therapy Scene or a Free Time Scene with another player, reduce your Drug score instead. If you gain a memory in a Free Time Scene with one of the characters mentioned on your character card, you may choose to remember the connection that you two share. You may decide how your characters know each other, but it must be consistent with the memories that you both already have. If the other player's Drug Resistance Roll for the scene succeeded, he automatically gains this memory too. If not, he gets to make another Drug Resistance Roll with Empathy as the relevant attribute. If this roll succeeds, he gains the memory as well. If not, he must regain it in another free time scene with your character.

Rule about World Facts:

If your total modified value on a results roll for either a Free Time or Therapy scene is 8 or less, you may make up one additional fact about the Palace or the Outside world. Write it on a 3x5 card and place it in the center of the table with the others. Consider this a consolation prize. Remember that all new facts must be something all characters would reasonably know and consistent with all previously established facts.

Riot Scene:

In this type of scene, your character attempts to start an uprising among the other patients in the Palace of Mental Hygiene. This is a high risk option, to say the least.

Mechanics:

You must make two rolls to successfully start a riot. Make one Drug Resistance Roll using Willpower as the relevant attribute and a second using Empathy as the relevant attribute. If one or both of these fail, the riot is put down by the Palace staff before it properly begin. You lose one point from the attribute(s) used in the roll(s) that failed. You must also increase your Drug attribute by one point for each roll that failed. If both of your rolls succeed, each player gets to decide if her character will join the riot. Every player who joins in the riot must also make two Drug Resistance Rolls, one using Willpower, and the other using Empathy. For each roll that succeeds, the player may roll one die to contribute to the final result. Once that has been completed, each player rolls the number of dice he is entitled to roll (you always roll both) the results are summed and then divided by the total number of players (not the number who participated.) Fractions are rounded up. Compare the value to table 3 to determine the results of the riot. The result applies to all characters who participated:

Table 3: Riot Time Scene Results	
Total	Result
1	Riot is put down violently. Lose a memory, Increase Drug by 2
2	The Palace staff reacts quickly. Everyone is heavily sedated. Increase Drug Level by 2
3	
4	You are not able to organize yourselves effectively. Decrease Empathy and Willpower by 1
5	
6	You are successful. The Palace staff retreat, but come back with reinforcements and order is restored. Still you gain confidence from the experience. Gain 1 point of Empathy and Willpower.
7	
8	
9	Your riot is an unprecedented success. The Palace staff flees in a panic. You control the Palace for several weeks until the military puts down your revolution. You are remembered as Folk Heroes.
10	
11	
12	

Ending the game:

The game ends in one of five ways:

- 1.) **Your drug score reaches 18** Your brain is completely fried by the drugs. You spend the rest of your life in a catatonic state.
- 2.) **You lose your last memory or your willpower reaches zero.** You have won a victory against yourself. You love Big Brother. You can be returned to society as a good citizen. Just like the government wants.
- 3.) **Your empathy reaches zero.** You've lost the ability to relate to your fellow human beings, rendering you a psychopath. You spend the rest of your life locked in a padded cell wearing a straight jacket.
- 4.) **You regain your last memory.** You have learned how to keep your sense of self inside the Palace of Mental Hygiene; the government will not be able to take that from you. You may never escape physically, but mentally, you are beyond their reach.
- 5.) **You participate in a Riot Scene that has a results score of 9 or more:** Your heroic death at the hands of this brutal regime brings unwanted international attention to the oppressive nature of the government and inspires further acts of defiance among your fellow citizens.