

Sit Tight

by Jakob Weisblat

Sit Tight is a LARP about the experience of waiting (alone yet together) for something you have no control over. It may provoke feelings of anxiety, frustration, and/or isolation. The game is played out over three different scenarios, each exploring the same themes in a different context. The pregame workshop, game, and debrief together run around three hours.

Content warnings: poor parental relationships, death of a family member, vague references to character religion, troubled upbringings, the afterlife, debt, alcoholism

This is a game for 6 players and a facilitator. Game can be played standing up or sitting down. Only the facilitator should read the next page. You'll want 6 chairs, a device that can play audio.

Pregame

Safety: OK checkin; cut/break; time in and out of character; look down; open door

Expectations

Game will take place in a waiting room. What's outside the waiting room will change, but the waiting room is the same throughout the game. There will be three scenes, and what's on the other side of that door will change, but the waiting room itself will not.

You'll be playing a different person in each scene. At the beginning of each scene, I'll give you a few minutes to read your new character (less than half a page). Feel free to improvise details of your character's life that aren't explicitly specified on the sheet; it's intentionally short so that you don't have much to digest.

Does anyone have any questions about how game will go?

Workshop

We're going to do a short workshop to get into the right mood. This game is all about things not happening, and the tension that that creates.

Find a seat and get comfortable. We're going to wait for various amounts of time, to see what that feels like. Don't think about anything in particular, just wait here.

- *First, we're going to wait 30 seconds with our eyes open.*
- *Now, we're going to wait 2 minutes with our eyes closed. **[wait]**. How did that feel? What sort of feelings did it bring up in you, and where did you feel them in your body? Did you try to distract yourself?*
- *Now, we're going to wait 2 minutes one last time. This time, instead of keeping to yourself, share a silent moment with a stranger near you.*

Take a moment to read your first character, go to the bathroom, or do anything else you need; game proper will begin in 5-10 minutes.

[repeat before each scene] Before we begin this scene, I'm going to ask you to hold still and wait while you listen to a song. Think about your character, and their emotional state. Imagine what their life was like in the moments leading up to this one. This game is about waiting, and the anxiety that it often triggers. Feel free to be true to your character and not interact, or overinteract, if that's what they would do. When the song finishes, the **[first]** scene will begin.

Act I: The Hospital

♪ Wait, by M83 ♪

You're in a hospital waiting room. It was probably pretty once, but now the wallpaper has faded a bit under the harsh fluorescent lights. There's a vending machine in the corner and some one-size-fits-all abstract artwork on the walls. A clock on the wall shows the time, 6:55 PM. Every so often, a nurse hurriedly rushes by, but none of them ever stop to talk to you. There are no windows. There are, however, a plethora of mildly uncomfortable green chairs.

A doctor enters the room and approaches the group of you. "I have news."

Act II: The Train

♪ Nightmares, by Myuu ♪

You're in a train station waiting area. It's awfully cold out, and though you're indoors, the cold early-afternoon gusts still have an impact on you, keeping you bundled up. There's a greyish window through which you can see a snowstorm blowing around. There's no signal here, and it's probably the storm's fault. There's a DEPARTURES board on the wall, which claims the train north to Montreal left half an hour ago and the train West to Cleveland and Chicago is "arriving". But you can see no sign of any trains.

The sound of an oncoming train startles you from your reverie. Is this your train?

Act III: Limbo

♪ Sister, by Martin Stig Anderson ♪

This is the place people go to wait, before they move onto the next life. When you're ready, or perhaps when they're ready for you, your name will be called, and you can pass on to whatever is on the other side of that door. Until then, all there is to do is wait.

Let the discussion play out a bit. Don't call Quillian until they've gotten at least a slight sense that Riley doesn't see their relationship the same way, unless that doesn't seem likely to happen. Leave some space between calling Tracy and Uri. Feel free to change the order if it seems like people are ready to move on.

Quillian, Sabra, Voss, Riley, Tracy, Uri

Debrief

Tell us your real name, and tell us about a time you spent waiting for something, and how it was resolved. Then thank one or two people for a meaningful moment they created in game for you.

Per-character content warnings & descriptions for casting:

The Hospital

Siblings Alex (actor), Banks, Dana are waiting for their father in surgery. Charlie = Banks's partner. Eden's wife and Farah's daughter Hope is giving birth. Eden had an affair a while ago.

Alex - can be mean or uncaring, death of a family member. Lots of reading

Banks - death of a family member, romance

Charlie - really sad, tragic backstory, romance

Dana - really sad, death of a family member, emotionally intense

Eden - done something bad (unfaithful spouse), pregnancy/birth, being a parent

Farah - can be mean or uncaring, pregnancy/birth, being a parent

The Train Station

Indigo is moving an illicit package. Jamie and Kansas are dating and looking forward to spending time in Montreal together; Jamie is anxious about it. Lane works for the DEA and is chasing drugs to Canada. Neeru's father is dying in Cleveland.

Indigo - criminal, alcoholism

Jamie - high anxiety, romance, longer read

Kansas - romance

Lane - cop

Mal - can be mean or uncaring, chaplain, eccentric

Neeru - family sads

Limbo

Voss drove a truck over Quillian and Riley. Sabra is old. Tracy died young. Uri has been here for ages.

Quillian - romance

Riley - romance, lying, tragic backstory

Sabra - death of a family member

Tracy - tragic backstory

Uri - chaplain, emotionally intense

Voss - done something bad (car accident), alcoholism, emotionally intense

Thanks to my playtesters: Jamie Casbon, Lara Marcin, Mark Goldman, Xinlin Chen

Character Sheet - Alex

31 years old

You're back in Cleveland, but perhaps not in the circumstances you expected. Last time, it was a church, and this time, it's a hospital. Two of the places where people from different walks of life are brought together.

Last summer, you were here for your sibling Dana's wedding. It was really beautiful, they and their partner Sasha got married in the old Presbyterian church on Fairmount, and the flowers were all blooming just in time. That was seven months ago, and now there's a snowstorm outside and it's hellishly cold. Funny how the weather here tracks your mood.

You haven't seen your father since then, either. He looks so much worse now than he did then. Sometimes you feel bad about the way that your relationship with him went, you blame yourself for your falling out. But really, if you're being honest, the two of you never really got along. Your mother was the parent you favored, and since she died five years ago, you haven't really been home much.

You'd grown closer with your father in recent years; it seemed like he was happy you finally decided to make something of your life (his words). Acting wasn't a real career to him, so he was quite glad to hear you were going to nursing school. He even promised you a big chunk of his (quite sizable) fortune, if you were to graduate. What you didn't tell him, though, was that you dropped out of nursing school three months ago to act - you finally got a big break, a part in an Off-Broadway play, and a fairly big part even. The show opens next week, and you were thinking of inviting your family to see you in it in a few weeks. But here you are, seeing them even earlier.

Truth be told, your motivations for coming home aren't entirely selfless and loving. Gerald, your father, can be vengeful, and if he were to die soon he would leave you nothing if you didn't come back to see him one last time. And you're still way in debt from nursing school, which isn't great on an actor's wages. So you came home to make an appearance, and to keep up the illusion of being in school, and then, well, dad's condition deteriorated rapidly.

If your Dad died here, that would be sad, you guess. And it would crush Dana, and you don't want that. But it would also make this coming-clean-to-your-family-about-acting thing so much easier, and that must be worth something. And the crippling debt that you worry about every night could be gone.

You arrived at the hospital this morning. The Cleveland Clinic is the best place in the world to go for Salma's Disease, but even so they said the surgery would be a tough one. Dad was admitted two hours ago. They said it could take anywhere from one and a half to three and a half hours. You hope you're done waiting here soon.

People you know

- Banks - your older sibling. Also connected better with Mom, never really got along with Dad. You were close as kids and have drifted apart as adults, especially when you moved to the East Coast and they moved to the West Coast.
- Charlie - Banks's partner. They're kinda weird. Banks likes them a lot, can't be that bad.
- Dana - your younger sibling. Younger by almost ten years, the two of you never connected too much as kids, but you always had a little bit of a protector role with them. You don't like to see them so sad. They're the only one to know you quit nursing school.

Character Sheet - Banks

34 years old

Dad never really was a fan of doing things on anyone else's schedule. As a businessman, this made him great. As a father, this made him frustrating. And now, here he is, having surgery that may save his life from Salma's Disease, or he may never wake up from. And you were supposed to be on vacation.

When you were a kid, Dad tried to connect with you, but you never really shared his interests, and he didn't try too hard to connect with yours. So you read books while he watched baseball and tried to get you into it. And you hung out more with Mom in the kitchen. Later, you hung out with your younger sibling Alex; the two of you played so many games as kids, it's hard to believe you don't talk to each other much any more.

As you got older, Dad didn't try as hard, and he was more disconnected than ever. Retrospectively, you think your parents' marriage might have been less stable than you thought it was; or perhaps he wasn't as happy at work as he pretended to be. Or any number of other things. But at the time you always thought it was that you weren't good enough for him. It took a lot of years of therapy to get out of that mindset, and you're not particularly grateful to him for it.

You might not even be back in Cleveland to visit him if it weren't for Charlie. Charlie, in a way that always confused you, connected to your dad in a way that you never did. Maybe Dad felt like Charlie was a chance to make up for not being a great dad to you, or maybe they just had more in common than you. The first time you brought Charlie to meet your parents, you had concerns that they wouldn't like each other. But you couldn't have been more wrong.

You and Charlie met in college, twelve years ago, and you got married six years ago. They were a bright spot in a darker part of your life, and they've been a bright spot in the brighter parts of your life too. The two of you moved to Seattle after graduation, you for work and Charlie for graduate school, and you've lived there ever since. You used to come visit your parents here in Cleveland twice a year, but ever since Mom died five years ago it's been more sporadic. You're grateful she got to see you get married, but visiting home without her is hard.

When you heard a few days ago that Dad's condition was worsening significantly and he may not have that long to live, you talked to Charlie and decided that you would both come to visit him. You're sad that you can't be skiing like you planned, but it's not as though going skiing while your dad was dying would be particularly satisfying.

It pains you so much to see Charlie sad like this. You want to comfort them, but you don't really know what to say. Hopefully your dad makes it through this. They took him into surgery almost two hours ago. For now, all you can do is wait.

People you know

- Alex - your younger sibling. Also connected better with Mom, never really got along with Dad. You were close as kids and have drifted apart as adults, especially when you moved to the West Coast and they moved to the East Coast. They're in nursing school.
- Charlie - your partner of 12 years. You love them dearly, and you're sad that they're sad. They grew up in foster care, never having a family of their own. Your family is theirs.
- Dana - your youngest sibling. Younger by over ten years, the two of you never connected too much as kids. By the time they were old enough to be an actual person to interact with, you'd moved out of the house. You like them though, wish you were closer.

Character Sheet - Charlie

33 years old

You don't remember much about your own family - you spent most of your childhood in various foster homes. Some distant cousins, but they didn't like your parents and decided they didn't like you either, and later some strangers. None of them were too terrible or anything, but none of them ever felt like a real family to you. The relationships felt temporary, and, fifteen years later, you haven't really remained in contact with any of them.

You met Banks in college, and they understood you, loved you for your eccentricities and all. You started dating pretty soon after you met, and now you've been married for six years. You remember ten years ago, when you were first going to meet their family; Banks was so nervous if you were going to get along. You didn't really have high expectations, but, to your surprise and to Banks's, you and their dad, Gerald hit it off right away.

He put in a real effort to get to know you, and you were touched by his genuineness. He and Banks fought growing up, and it seemed to you like maybe this was his strategy to get back in touch with his kid. Gerald and Banks don't really know how to talk to each other, though, so when you're around them both it feels a little bit like you're the glue that holds them together.

Though you and Banks live in Seattle and Banks's family (well, just Gerald and Dana now since Banks's mom died five or so years ago) live in Cleveland, you try to visit twice a year. Last time you visited was in March, when Dana, Banks's youngest sibling, was getting married. It was really pretty, but even then it was clear that Gerald wasn't doing great.

You're the one who calls to update Gerald on your and Banks's lives, and the two of you actually talk fairly frequently. Last year, you were the first of the kids that he told when he was diagnosed with Salma's Disease. That was a sad day, and he's only gotten worse since.

A couple days ago, Gerald called you to say that his doctor said he might not have too much longer to live. You and Banks changed your plans, cancelling a skiing vacation to come visit here instead. You might not have many more chances. Banks wasn't thrilled, but they want what's best for you and so you both decided to come here and either be supportive or say goodbye.

Gerald went into surgery 2 hours ago, and you've felt a little numb ever since. There's nothing you can do now. Just wait until they're done and hope he's still alive. At least you have Banks here to comfort you.

People you know

- Banks - your partner of 12 years. You love them dearly, and normally you're the one supporting them emotionally. You're glad they're here for you now.
- Alex - Banks's younger sibling. They're a nurse or something. You don't see them too often.
- Dana - Alex's youngest sibling. Still lives in Cleveland, is the one who checks in on Gerald regularly. You have fond memories of playing Scrabble with them on vacation a couple years ago.

Character Sheet - Dana

23 years old

Your father has always been one of the most important people in your life. When you were a kid, you found it hard to make friends at school, and it was always Dad who talked you through it and made you feel okay. Your older siblings left the house before you were really old enough to interact with them as peers, and you feel like they never really came back too often.

Mom was always focused on her writing in the peak years of your growing up, but Dad's business was already starting to wind down, so he had more time to spend with you. You have fond memories of going to the baseball game, of going swimming together, of bonding over your shared love of classic rock.

And then she died when you were seventeen - it was sudden, and you were in shock for a while afterward. You and Dad helped each other get through it. That's probably when you became as close as you are now.

Around a year ago, Dad told you that he had been diagnosed with Salma's Disease, and that he might only have a few years left to live. That hit you pretty hard, but your partner Sasha helped you cope with it. This time of your lives, combined with their impending deployment to Iraq, led you to get married at what some of your friends thought an awfully early time. You'd known each other for two years, and you're sure this was who you wanted to spend the rest of your life with. You got married in March, and they shipped off to Iraq in August. Now it's November, and you miss them like hell.

A few days ago, Dad's condition got markedly worse. You took some time off from work and went to the doctor with him, and they scheduled a surgery for today. The two of you spent a lot of time together these past few days, and the house even felt a little less lonely when Alex and Charlie and Banks flew in. It's been a lovely few days, but also a really sad few days. You're not sure how you'll get on if Dad doesn't make it through this. Sasha could probably get some emergency time off if the worst happened, so at least you'd get to see them without a stupid camera in the way. But you prefer not to think about that and to hope for the best.

They took him into surgery two hours ago, and you still don't know what you're supposed to do with yourself for all this time. Nor, by the look of it, does anyone else here in this waiting room.

People you know

- Alex - Your older sibling. They're almost ten years older, and they're in a play Off Broadway! But the rest of the family still thinks they're in nursing school, so probably you shouldn't talk about that.
- Banks - Your oldest sibling. You never really overlapped much at home, them being 12 years older than you and all. And then they moved to Seattle.
- Charlie - Banks's spouse. They come to visit when Banks does, once or twice a year. You share their love of word games, and they're possibly the person here other than you who is closest to Gerald, your father. They don't seem to be doing so great.

Character Sheet - Eden

38 years old

Your wife Hope was in labor for twelve hours before Dr. Hernandez said she would need a C-section. Twenty minutes later, she was in the operating room, and you're now out here waiting. You hope everything goes well - they say this has a very low complication rate, and neither Hope nor the baby is particularly at risk. But you can't help but worry anyway. It should take around forty-five minutes, the doctor said, and then you'll be able to meet the baby. You hope everything is going well in there.

Your relationship with Hope was falling apart a little bit - you'd been having an affair with a guy named Gus since you weren't getting what you needed from your marriage. You felt bad about this, but better than leaving Hope, you figured. A year or so ago, you started seeing a marriage counselor together, and your communication with each other improved far more than you hoped it would. You even decided to have a baby. You stopped seeing Gus, and you're glad of it.

Your family live in Australia, and they can only visit with a large amount of advance planning; Farah, Hope's parent, is here with you in the hospital, though. They seem excited about this whole being-a-grandparent thing. You hope they won't be too overbearing when they stay with you, but you're grateful for the help. They drove you and Hope to the hospital.

You've spent the last few months getting ready for the baby to enter your lives. You have a fair amount saved up, so you quit your job a month ago, wanting to give the baby the most attention you can while they're still young.

They took Hope away around fifteen minutes ago, and you can't wait to see her again and meet your new kid. All there are out here are a bunch of nervous people and Hope's parent who doesn't really like you. Those 45 minutes can't go fast enough.

People you know

- Farah - Hope's parent. They don't really like you for one reason or another. Thought their kid could do better, you guess. But at least they're as excited to be a grandparent as you are to be a parent.

Character Sheet - Farah

65 years old

You remember the day that your kid was born like it was yesterday. Better than yesterday, probably. It's crazy to think that she's in the OR now, and if all goes well you'll soon be a grandparent.

As a kid, Hope was always so adventurous, you knew it was going to be hard when she left you. Being a parent is like that, you figure. When she decided to move to Cleveland, of all places, you were quite surprised. But her partner Eden went to school here, and that's where they wanted to be together.

You flew in a week or so ago, since you're retired and you wanted to be here for when the baby was born. You drove Eden and Hope to the hospital in your rental car twelve hours ago. Everything's been in limbo ever since.

Eden has never felt like the right person for your Hope. Hope is like your partner was, before they died. She can't be contained, certainly not in a small dilapidated city like this one. But Eden's ideas of how life is to be lived are so fixed, so boring, so... uninspired. When you were their age, you wanted to go places, to learn things, to change the world. But they just want to go through their daily routine.

There's something else, you recognized it a year or two ago from what your late partner had done once upon a time. You think Eden might be having an affair. Or they might have been around a year ago - they're acting less erratic now, and they seem more dependable. But you can't help but feel like something is off.

But now's not the time for all that. In less than an hour, Eden will be a parent and you will be a grandparent. You're looking forward to helping Hope recover, and maybe to building a few bridges with Eden while you all take care of a baby together.

But that's all to wait for when this infernal C-section is finally over with. Dr. Hernandez said "around 45 minutes" fifteen minutes ago or so. Hopefully she is good at estimating...

People you know

- Eden - Hope's spouse. You think they might be an okay parent, but you're worried that they're not good enough for your Hope.

Character Sheet - Indigo**25 years old**

You can't believe you're all wrapped up in this shit... but it will be over soon.

Due to a series of unfortunate circumstances, starting with an alcohol problem, and culminating with a very scary individual giving you a telephone call, you're here. You never thought you'd be a criminal, much less the sort that carries packages of who-knows-what across borders. But they threatened you, and you do owe them a lot of money. So it was agreed. Several thousand dollars, and relieving your debts, if you bring one package to a specific address in Montreal.

You try not to think about what this could be, who it could be harming. But there's not that many things to think about in this godforsaken train station - the train is almost an hour late, and the arrivals display claims it came half an hour ago, but you're quite certain that you or one of the other passengers in this room would have noticed if that had happened.

When you get there, you're supposed to find a Jack Ryerson at 6139 Rue des Sizerins; Laval, QC H7L 5V2. You don't speak French, but hopefully Google Maps will get you where you need to go.

But that's not going to happen until this train leaves. Part of you hopes it will never come, but you can't stay here in Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak station forever.

The snow blows by outside the large grey window, and you shift idly.

You hope the train comes soon.

Character Sheet - Jamie**28 years old**

This was supposed to be a fun week-long getaway. Just you and Kansas, together, in Montreal for a week. Culture, restaurants, and so much more. But that won't happen until your train shows up.

You and Kansas have been dating for almost a year, but you've never spent more than a day or two together, since they have a really busy work life and you are almost always on call. But you spend weekends together pretty often, and you just started raising a dog together. This could be a good first opportunity to see what it would be like to live together longer-term.

You're not one for spending a lot of time in close quarters with someone. As a kid, you always had to share a room with your sister Jeanie, and ever since then you've liked your space. But you were going to give it a try this week. Spend a lot of time with someone. After all, they might be the one. You'd planned out every hour of this week-long adventure, and you spent the last months looking forward to it.

Except this snowstorm seems determined to get in your way. The train to Montreal was supposed to leave Albany at 10:30 AM, and it's now 11:30 AM and there's no sign of a train. Worse yet, the display claims the train left half an hour ago, though Kansas assures you that someone in this station would have noticed if a train came by, and everyone seems to be sitting in the same place they were for the last hour. But you're still anxious - you don't want to get in after night falls and you don't know where you're going. You don't want to be stuck in an unfamiliar city and not even be able to see where you're going.

And this makes you worry about other things. You're leaving your dog Maggie, a friend is coming to check on her every day, but what if she doesn't do okay in all this snow? What if the power and the heat go out?

But you try to focus on the positive things. You and Kansas are going to Montreal. It's gonna be great. If this train ever shows up.

Character Sheet - Kansas**27 years old**

You've been looking forward to this week for months now. You and Jamie have been dating for almost a year, and to celebrate you're taking the train to Montreal. Except the weather isn't cooperating and the entire state of New York is engulfed in a huge snowstorm.

You'd been looking forward to spending more time with Jamie - you're raising a dog, Maggie, together, and you often spend time together, a day here and a day there, but you've been looking for something more. This trip is going to be that. Hey, even if you get stuck in this train station, at least you're stuck here together.

The train to Montreal was supposed to leave Albany at 10:30 AM, and it's now 11:30 AM and there's no sign of a train. The sign claims the train left half an hour ago, but you're sure someone would have noticed if a train arrived. It seems like the same 6 cold, bundled-up people have been sitting in this train station for the last hour at least.

Jamie planned a whole schedule for your week, and they don't seem to be doing great with the whole wrench of a snowstorm that has been thrown in your plans. You hope the train comes soon...

Character Sheet - Lane**45 years old**

You shouldn't have made those stupid remarks about your boss at the party last month... you're sure that's what has you in this pickle.

You work for the DEA, in a division that's trying to track down international drug trafficking rings. But your boss is incompetent and your division probably hasn't caught anyone significant in five years. Other than the occasional travel, though, it's pretty stable, uninteresting work, and that's what you need in your life. You're getting married soon, and you're knee deep in wedding planning, so you'd rather not spend too much time on work.

Presumably, your boss found out about your commentary about his competence, and decided that the best response was a wild goose chase of an assignment. You can't prove anything, of course, but you've been investigating this ring for months and there's no reason to believe they're in Montreal of all places right now. But your boss was having none of that. So here you are, stuck in a train station in Albany on your way north to Montreal. You would have flown, but the snowstorm means all the flights are cancelled. Of course, it also means all the trains are delayed too.

Your boss could just be being incompetent again, and legitimately believe this drug trafficking ring has set up shop in Montreal. But you can't prove him wrong until you get to Montreal, and you can't get to Montreal until your stupid train arrives. The sign on the wall claims your train came by 30 minutes ago, but you've been in this station for an hour and a half. No trains have come by. And, at this point, you're convinced that no trains will.

Character Sheet - Mal**50 years old**

A train station full of waiting passengers is one of the most magical places in the world. Sometimes when you're in this boat, you think of the place (in this case, Albany-Rensselaer Train Station) as a crossroads, where all the people of different kinds can meet on their journeys. Your favorite thing about travelling by train is that you have time to get to know the other passengers.

The best people you've met have been so surprising to you - there was a couple who was taking the train across the country to honeymoon in Santa Fe. There was the man who told the same story about his fight with a venomous snake in the mountains of Idaho to twelve different people, impeccably excited about it each time, as you listened in from the next compartment over. There was the little kid that seemed to think that "frog" was a generic term for animals of all sorts, and was endlessly shouting it as your train passed the livestock grazing in the fields of Wyoming.

You've been travelling around the country by train pretty much nonstop for four years now. You figure eventually you'll get bored of it. Perhaps you'll go to Europe or something then, but the United States has always been endlessly fascinating to you.

You were an investment banker, for a while. Your firm won big a couple years ago, and while most of your coworkers saw having made a lot of money as an opportunity to make even more money, you saw things differently. You saw an opportunity to do whatever you wanted with your life, social convention be damned. So you got on a train to visit a friend from your childhood. The friend wasn't really the same person they'd been, and you ended up fighting and leaving early, but the train ride was great. Ever since then you've been hooked.

You took a train to Albany from New York City a couple days ago, and now you're heading on Westward to Chicago for a hot cocoa exposition. The wildest things are available to you when you have no schedule to report to. You wonder who else is waiting here at this station. Your train is late, so you might as well get to know them while you can.

Character Sheet - Neeru**33 years old**

There couldn't be a worse time for this snowstorm to have come.

You got a call last night that your father was in the hospital, and this was the fastest way you could afford to go visit him in Cleveland. It's been a long time since you were home to see your father, and you're not sure how to feel about that. In one sense, your life has been more stable since you stopped visiting home. You're feeling some anxiety about how he might have changed since you saw him last. Some guilt about not having gone home sooner, though you've been working hard to get your life in Albany off the ground. And some fear that you won't make it in time, that you'll be heading to Cleveland, to all those memories you want to avoid, for no good reason.

The train was scheduled to come ten minutes ago, but the snowstorm shows no signs of parting. No news from Cleveland, either.

Hopefully the train comes soon..

Character Sheet - Quillian

62 years old

All else being equal, you got to see almost all the things you wanted to in life.

You met Riley thirty-five years ago, and it was the best thing that ever happened to you. The two of you shared a beautiful life together in Phoenix, raising your three kids together, going on outdoor adventures.

Your work was fulfilling too. You got pretty invested in it at times, but it wasn't so much as to make your home life difficult - you ran a local education nonprofit, and if you had died a few years early you would be worried about its fate, but you're now happy that it's competently in someone else's hands.

You didn't get to see as much of the world as you wanted to - in particular, you had dreams of going to Australia, but nobody gets to see everything and you got to see a lot of it. It's also a little disappointing that you'll never get to meet your grandkids.

But, what's done is done. You were driving along the highway on your way to visit your kids in Los Angeles, with Riley in the passenger seat, and an 18-wheeler came out of nowhere barreling into your lane. You swerved, but it was too late. But, at least it was fast and not too painful. You're glad that you get to experience whatever's next with Riley by your side.

You woke up here a few seconds ago, the last moment you remember being your death. But that is already starting to seem less relevant; there's something about this place. You wonder what's on the other side of the door; you have the feeling that it's different for everyone. Are you ready to face what the world has in store for you?

People you know

- Riley - your spouse. They screamed about a truck, and now the two of you are here.

Character Sheet - Riley**64 years old**

Life was a little unfulfilling. Maybe you'll do better next time, whatever that means.

You spent the last thirty-five years married to Quillian. It was okay, you guess, when you got to spend time together and they paid attention to you. But it wasn't always like that. While they were out travelling, you took care of the kids. While they had fun with "your" friends, you worked hard to keep food on the table. At the end of the day, you could never tell them that you were unhappy, though. You felt it would break their heart. So many years ago, when they asked you to marry them, you said yes because you didn't really know what else to say. And then you never really found a time to tell them you weren't happy - it's like you've been stuck in someone else's life.

Of course, it wasn't all bad. Your kids are great, and one of them was going to be a parent themselves soon. You were driving from Phoenix to Los Angeles to visit them when that stupid semi truck squashed your car like an overripe vegetable. Quillian didn't even notice it in the driver seat until you screamed, and by that time it was too late. At least your death was pretty fast.

If only you could have stayed alive to see your grandkids. But you guess you're supposed to let go of all that now? Supposedly they're going to call you to move onto the next life soon.

You woke up here a few seconds ago, the last moment you remember being your death. But that is already starting to seem less relevant; there's something about this place...

People you know

Quillian - your spouse. You were driving together, and now the two of you are here.

Character Sheet - Sabra**93 years old**

Life had been going on so long that it's almost a relief not to have to worry about it anymore.

You lived in an old folks' home these last few years - it was a bit depressing at times, pretty much all of your friends that were left died in the last twenty years, so the only people you really knew well that you got to see were your family, and they didn't visit all that often. But when your kids came to see you once or twice a year so, that was the highlight of your life. Especially when they brought your grandkids. They moved to the U.S. many years ago, leaving you behind in the English countryside.

In the last twenty years, you've appreciated even more the bond that you've had with your pet turtle, Barbara, of fifty years. You hope that someone at the Home will find a new owner for her; it's not fair that she should have to stop living as soon as you did.

You've gotten used to the solitude. You and Barbara would spend your days listening to music and watching the other people around. You wonder what waits for you when you move on.

You must have died in your sleep, because you remember saying goodnight to Barbara, and then falling asleep, and now you're here. Seems like a nice way to go, really. This place has a bit of a calming air to it, but you can't put a finger on it. You think they'll call your name to move on soon enough.

Character Sheet - Tracy**37 years old**

You don't belong here, it's not fair. You'd only just gotten started on the fun part of life.

These people all look old, as though they had the chance to live out their lives, find fulfillment. Your spouse, your kids, your students, your friends - they'll all miss you, you hope. And you'll miss them. Though you can feel them already fading slightly from your mind - something is funny about the air in this place.

Your family was depending on you to keep them safe. It kills you that you'll never get to see your kids grow up, that you'll never see them learn to make cheesecake or read your favorite books or graduate high school or have kids of their own.

You died of a heart attack. You were too young for that. It was so fast that you didn't even get to say goodbye to anyone. One minute you were walking across the campus of UW Madison, where you teach, and the next you were here. In this waiting room.

You look around the waiting room, wondering if there's some way out, some way back, some loophole. But it doesn't seem to be. But you don't want to get called to move on... that would make this too.. final. Too real.

Character Sheet - Uri**?? years old**

You've been waiting here a really long time. Longer than anyone else you've ever seen come through.

Most people, they hang out here for half an hour to a few hours. Some of them for a few days at most. But you've been here for years. You're not sure what you did to whoever's in charge of this place to deserve it, but at this point you've accepted that there's nothing you can do except wait.

It's not really clear to you how they choose who goes on when. Some people come in here, crying like there's no tomorrow (well, technically there isn't..), and they always calm down before moving on. But it's not as though the stoic ones move on immediately either.

You've come to think it's something about accepting one's fate and destiny. But, then again, you're pretty sure you've accepted yours. And you don't think you're destined to be in this otherworldly waiting room until the end of time. You have a sense that there's something else behind that door, something for you to move onto, when you're deemed ready.

Time is funny here, and you can't be sure how long has passed. You think it's been at least a year, though. You've stopped thinking too much about the details of your own life, and started talking more to the people who come through. You want to learn their stories, though it's not clear if you'll ever be able to do anything with them. Besides, it's not as though you remember all of the stories you've ever heard, or even anything close to it. But you do your best.

Five more people have appeared in the waiting room in the last minute or two. Maybe you'll be able to learn something from them.

Character Sheet - Voss

42 years old

Aaaargh, you probably should not have been drinking. Definitely, even.

You were driving your semi truck through the mindlessly boring stretch of highway through Western Arizona, which is so pretty during the daytime but so lonesome at night. So you stopped and got some beer. You figured it couldn't hurt. And yet, here we are.

One minute, you were driving safely down the interstate. And then, the next, you were hurtling into oncoming traffic? You're not entirely sure what happened, but you're pretty sure it was your fault.

And you recognize **Quillian** and **Riley**... they were in the car that you hit right before you blacked out. It feels awful to imagine that you're responsible for their deaths, and yet you don't want to admit that to yourself. But it also feels like you're less connected to the self that hit them, already. Like this place is taking you away from your living self, moving you onward toward... something else.

Truck driving wasn't so lucrative a career anyway, perhaps it's better to move on to.. whatever's on the other side of that door.