



LARPs  
aspamia

# Gone

**Designers: Erez Zvulun and Hila Grgory Meinrat**

**Translator: Talia Nirgad Hasson**

**Contact: [hilargory@gmail.com](mailto:hilargory@gmail.com), [facebook.com/AspamiaLarp](https://facebook.com/AspamiaLarp)**

Gone is a larp about loss, guilt and trying to move on.

Wading in deeper

Up to her knees

The fall is a-coming, closer each morning

It snarls at her heels and breathes down her neck

Wading in deeper

Up to her waist

A raven is calling Promethean warning

The ties to her arms and her legs pull her down

Wading in deeper

Over her head

A year ago, Lyra took her own life. She was 16 years old.

Today, family and friends gather to shoot a film in her memory.

Lyra is still with them, in their memories, in their hearts, whispering in their ears.

**Details:**

Number of participants: 6-10.

Number of organizers: min 2.

Time: 4-5 hours.

Genre: drama.

Type of location: any closed location, preferably a black box or a realistic house setting.

Organizers style: setting a dramatic, honest tone during the workshop and passive during the game, except when using the camera meta-technique.

The LDs must be quiet, calm, serious and respectful, from the moment they greet the players until the end of the debrief.

**Spatial design:**

The main playing area is a large space marked by duct tape. It includes a few seats that force the players to sit close to each other (either a sofa or chairs taped together), and a coffee table.

Another small space marked by duct tape is next to the main space, and includes a table with food and beverages. This space has not seats.

Using duct tape, mark a door between these two areas. There are no other doors or exits.

Outside these two areas, leave a third area containing two chairs facing each other. If playing in a black box, place a spot light above this area.

**Props:**

10 white roses

A suicide letter, handwritten and folded (text included)

Printed character sheets (included)

Video camera (not a cellphone)

Sound system

"Wading in deeper" by Katzenjammer (or a song you see fit is your native language)

**Characters:**

Character sheets are included at the end of this document.

We recommend changing the characters' names to local ones.

The three siblings are named after constellations, but the meaning isn't as important as the fact that they share a theme – in the original Hebrew, the theme was music.

Lyra: only appears using the meta-techniques *whisper*, *memory* and *fantasy*. She is cast during the workshop, and her player casts the other characters.

James: Lyra, Leo and Carina's father, Eleanor's ex-husband. The larp takes place in his house.

Eleanor: Lyra, Leo and Carina's mother, James' ex-wife, married to Anatoly.

Anatoly (use a foreign name): married to Eleanor. Lyra lived with them before committing suicide.

Leo: Lyra's twin brother.

Carina: Lyra's younger sister.

Helen: Lyra's best friend.

Matt: Lyra's best friend.

Julia: Lyra's aunt, Eleanor's sister.

Luke: head of the local Gay-Straight Alliance. Lyra and Matt were members of the organization, unbeknownst to the other characters.

If there aren't enough players, we recommend leaving out Julia, Anatoly and Luke (in this order).

## **The workshop**

During the workshop, the LDs must be the first to demonstrate each exercise.

### Introduction (five minutes)

Introduce yourselves and the game. Note that one of the players, to be cast later, will play Lyra, and explain her role in the larp. Clarify that this room is a safe space, and that nothing said or done during the workshop will leave it. Introduce the safewords *break* and *cut*, and note that they can be also be used during the workshop, and will be practiced later. Make a quick round of introduction of the players' names. State the timeline of the whole duration of the larp:

Then state the timeline of the whole duration of the larp: the whole duration of the larp is 4-5 hours. The workshop will take about 1.5 hours. After that there will be a 10-15 minute break. The runtime will be two hours. After that there will be a 10-15 minute break. The debrief will take about 1 hour.

Ask the players if they have questions so far, and then ask them to remain quiet for the rest of the workshop unless a certain exercise requires speech. If someone doesn't understand an instruction they may raise their hand, and one of the LDs will pull the aside and explain.

### First exercise: a moment of silence (one minute)

Stand quietly for one minute, looking down.

This exercise marks the beginning of the larp, and separates it from real life.

### Warm up: saying goodbye (20-25 minutes)

All players stand in a circle. Give all players but the first one a white rose. The first player lies on the floor, and the next player kneels near him, says a few words of goodbye and apologises. They lay their rose on the first player's chest, and lie down next to them. The first player then stands up and joins the circle. The next player says goodbye and apologises, and so on.

### Safewords exercise: it was your fault (10 minutes)

All players stand in a circle. Each one, on their turn, stands in the middle of the circle. The other players point at them and start advancing towards them while saying it was their fault, quietly at first and getting increasingly louder. The player standing in the

middle has to say "cut" when it becomes too much, and the other players then step back. The word must be said before they can touch them. The players can't opt out of this exercise, but they can stand in the middle and say "cut" before anything happens.

**Note:** At this point the LDs cast Lyra and separate her from the rest of the players. One LD stays with the group and explains the next exercise, and the other takes Lyra aside and explains her role and how to cast the other characters.

#### Meta-techniques exercise: dinner with the family (20 minutes)

Introduce the three meta-techniques to be used in the larp.

1. *Memory* and *fantasy*: at any point during the larp, a player may go to the area containing two chairs and sit down. Lyra will then sit in front of them, and they will explain to her the scene they want to play. They will play it until one of the LDs stops the scene and thanks the players. During the scene, the rest of the game freezes, and the other players may come listen. If playing in a black box, dim all the lights except for the spotlight above the chairs. If playing in a realistic environment, simply say "freeze".

A *memory* is something that happened between Lyra and the other character, and a *fantasy* is something they wish they could tell her.

2. *Whisper*: during the larp, Lyra will walk among the players and whisper in their ears. This is not insanity or anything supernatural, but a memory or an inner voice. The players decide their reaction to the *whisper*. Other characters do not hear the *whisper*, and it doesn't freeze the larp.
3. *Camera*: the LDs will enter the playing area with the camera when they see fit, and interview one of the characters. The interview only freezes the immediate surroundings, and the other characters cannot hear it. Be careful with this meta-technique. It is better to use it too sparingly than too often.

Play *dinner with the family*, during which the players will use *fantasy* and *memory* and the LD will use *whisper* and *camera*.

#### Bleeding exercise: losing someone (25 minutes)

Bring Lyra back to the group and form a circle, sitting down. Ask the players to tell about a person who was important to them and is no longer in their life. Note that this

doesn't have to be about death, but any kind of loss. Explain the story doesn't have to be real, but must sound real, and ask them not to tell whether it is real or not.

This exercise does not happen in turns. Each player talks in their own time. Give them at least five minutes of silence to decide what to say and how to say it. If no one talks after five minutes, the LD talks first.

#### Casting: reading the letter (10 minutes)

The players remain seated, and Lyra's player reads the suicide letter aloud. While reading, Lyra will make clear eye contact with each player and address the appropriate line to them. Follow Lyra's gaze and give each player their character sheet and nametag.

Ask the players not to read their character sheets until Lyra finishes reading the letter.

#### Characters and relationships: secrets (15 minutes)

Each character, except Lyra, confesses a secret. The other characters do not know this secret, but the players do. Clarify that the secret doesn't have to be about their relationship with Lyra.

#### Characters and relationships: walking (10 minutes)

Give the players the following instructions:

Walk around the room. Think about the way your character walks, the way they holds up their head, the position of their hands, how fast do they walk, how does their foot touch the ground. If you make eye contact with another character you can briefly meet, and then keep walking.

#### Ending and comfort: it's not your fault (5 minutes)

The players keep walking. When they meet another character, they hug them and say: "it's not your fault."

#### **Break** (10-15 minutes)

#### **Before playtime** (5 minutes)

Another moment of silence. Explain that at the beginning of the playtime a song will be played. At the end of the song, the players are in-play. When playtime ends, the

song will be played again as a signal. They may keep playing during the song, but must go off-play by the end of it. After playtime ends, Lyra will say a few words of goodbye to the characters.

Repeat, briefly, the safewords and meta-techniques.

Lyra sits in the memory and fantasy area and reads her letter again. When she is finished, play the song "Wading in deeper" by Katzenjammer.

### **Playtime** (two hours)

Interfere only if you must. Start playing the song again to signal the end during a dramatic moment, quietly at first and then louder and louder until it's almost too much. When the song ends, call all players to the main area and ask them to remain quiet while Lyra says a few words of goodbye to each one.

### **Post-playtime** (5 minutes)

Ask the players to form a circle. Each one, on their turn, rips off their nametag and introduces themselves by their real name. The other players greet them. Be the first to do this, and introduce yourself while smiling. The point is to break the tension and draw a clear line between the larp and real life, between the characters and the players.

### **Break** (10-15 minutes)

### **Debrief** (one hour)

Explain that during these rounds, each player will talk as much as they want, and no one may respond to the things being said. Add that at this stage you are not discussing the larp, you are discussing their personal experience. No one has to answer if they don't want to, and they may opt out. We recommend you participate in these rounds, but not start them. Note that this larp may be difficult and that you are available if a player needs support afterwards. If your country has a suicide helpline, tell the players about it and give them the number.

First round: what do you need right now? How are you feeling?

Second round: read the song or poem on your character sheet.

Third round: tell us about a scene that was meaningful to you. During this round the players may respond and discuss.

Open discussion.

## Suicide letter

It's not your fault, you couldn't have known.

I haven't been sleeping lately. I'm trying to find the way to tell you, to show you, but I don't want to make your life harder, I don't want to be a burden. You'll be better off without me.

Mom, when I was little you'd sing to me and I felt safe, but your song can't protect me anymore, I know how much my studies cost you, please don't blame yourself.

Dad, I love you, you were always there to support me, I'm sorry about everything.

Leo, you're my better half, now you'll have to go on without me.

Carina, don't forget you are a princess, I washed the shirt you always stole from me, it's yours now.

Helen, you're my light, I'm sorry I didn't have the chance to tell you.

Matt, I haven't told anyone, please don't tell them.

Julia, thank you for being there, you were like a mom to me when I had no one else.

Luke, go and change the world, for me too.

I hope you can forgive me, I just can't do it anymore, it hurts too much, the darkness is getting darker, heavier, it's pulling me down and I can't get up.

I'm sorry.



## Lyra

Safe in the light that surrounds me  
Free of the fear and the pain  
My subconscious mind  
Starts spinning through time  
To rejoin the past once again

Nothing seems real  
I'm starting to feel  
Lost in the haze of a dream  
And as I draw near  
The scene becomes clear  
Like watching my life on a screen

James and Eleanor are your parents. They divorced when you were little. You hated their constant fighting, and how they used you against each other.

In the last year before you did it you lived with Eleanor and Anatoly, her new husband. He doesn't like you; he always tried to take your mom away from you.

Leo and you were inseparable, twins, two halves of the same whole.

Carina is your little sister, you would do anything to protect her.

Helen, there's so much to say about her, she's your best friend, you think you're in love with her.

Matt sat next to you in class for three years, you didn't talk to each other until one day he told you he read your blog. You were scared at first, but he became your best friend. He's the only one who knows about you, and you know about him.

Luke is head of the GSA, he's smart and brave and everything you can't be. You wish you were like him.

Julia is your aunt, she was there for you during your parents' ugly divorce and she always supported you.

**James**

Lyra, Leo and Carina's father, Eleanor's ex-husband.

Sound the bugle now, play it just for me  
As the seasons change, remember how I used to be  
Sound the bugle now, tell them I don't care  
There's not a road I know that leads to anywhere

Now I can't go on, I can't even start  
I've got nothing left, just an empty heart  
I'm a soldier, wounded, so I must give up the fight  
There's nothing more for me, lead me away  
Or leave me lying here

You are Lyra's father, and you loved her so much. You don't understand where you went wrong. Your whole life went wrong. In the last year before it happened she didn't live with you, and you barely saw her.

You think Lyra never forgave you for getting divorced.

**Eleanor**

Lyra, Leo and Carina's mother, James' ex-wife, Anatoly's wife, Julia's sister.

Days go by and I forget what you look like  
Let me out of this prison by the sea  
Days go by and your voice is so distant  
But you're the only one who has the key  
To my prison by the sea

Every time I turn away I seem to miss a train  
Everyone knows I'm not to blame  
But every time I turn I miss a train  
Everyone knows this isn't right  
God help me survive this night

Since the divorce, you and Lyra fought constantly. In the last year before it happened she lived with you and Anatoly, and you thought things were getting better. How could you not see?

## **Anatoly**

Eleanor's husband, Lyra, Leo and Carina's stepfather.

If your tears flow at night like a river,  
My joy I shall kindle like straw,  
My bed, if you shiver, will warm you,  
I shall cover you, sleep on the floor.

If you yearn to join into the dancing  
I will play till my bowstrings all break,  
If a gift for your birthday you fancy,  
My life it is yours, love, to take.

If bread or if wine you are wanting  
Head bowed, I will stay on my feet  
'Til I've sold both my eyes in the market  
So my darling can drink and can eat.

But if ever when I am not with you,  
you laugh and carouse without thought,  
I'll burn down the rafters above you  
With the anger my jealousy's wrought

You are here for Eleanor, you love her so much, how could Lyra do this to her, and after everything Eleanor did for her. Just don't let James use her when she is so hurt, you know he wants her back, you can't lose her.

## **Leo**

Lyra's twin brother, Carina's big brother.

Sometimes is never quite enough  
If you're flawless, then you'll win my love  
Don't forget to win first place  
Don't forget to keep that smile on your face

Be a good boy  
Try a little harder  
You've got to measure up  
And make me prodder

I'll live through you  
I'll make you what I never was

Lyra was your twin, you were inseparable, without her you're just half a person – but you have to be strong for Carina, your little sister.

The only source of light in this darkness is that fact that you and Helen have gotten very close since it happened.

## **Carina**

Lyra and Leo's little sister.

You used to captivate me by your resonating light  
Now I'm bound by the life that you left behind  
Your face – it haunts my once pleasant dreams  
Your voice – it chased away all the sanity in me

These wounds won't seem to heal  
This pain is just too real  
There's just too much that time cannot erase

Lyra was your big sister, how could she do this to you, leave you here alone, how could she not think of you, and now you're left with all this pain and anger and no one understands, no one sees.

## **Helen**

Lyra's best friend.

At the curtain's call  
It's the last of all  
When the lights fade out  
All the sinners crawl

So they dug your grave  
And the masquerade  
Will come calling out  
At the mess you made

Don't wanna let you down  
But I am hell bound  
Though this is all for you  
Don't wanna hide the truth

When you feel my heat  
Look into my eyes  
It's where my demons hide  
Don't get too close  
It's dark inside  
It's where my demons hide

Lyra was your best friend, you were inseparable since kindergarten. You've always had a special connection with Leo and ever since what happened, you have gotten very close. That might be the only source of light in this darkness.

**Matt**

Lyra's best friend.

You were never one for waiting  
Still I always thought you'd wait for me  
Have you from your dream awakened  
And from where you are what do you see

Which of us is now in exile  
Which in need of amnesty  
Are you now but an illusion  
In my mind alone you breathe

Lyra has been your best friend since you discovered her blog, three years ago. You felt she was your soulmate, in a strange way. Telling her your secret was easy because you knew hers. Before that you were sure you were alone, different, and she made you feel it was okay.



**Luke**

Head of the Gay-Straight Alliance.

How it all turned to lies?

Sometimes I think that it's better to never ask why

Where there is desire there is gonna be a flame

Where there is a flame someone's bound to get burned

But just because it burns doesn't mean you're gonna die

You've gotta get up and try and try and try

You wanted to teach Lyra and Matt that the world can be changed, but the world was too hard for her. You couldn't show her that there's hope, that things change. You used to be in her place, but you had luck and were saved, and now she isn't here. And you are going to change the world and make it a safer place to make sure no one will ever feel like that again.

## **Julia**

Eleanor's sister, Lyra, Leo and Carina's aunt.

In my daughter's eyes I am a hero  
I am strong and wise and I know no fear  
But the truth is plain to see  
She was sent to rescue me  
I see who I wanna be  
In my daughter's eyes

In my daughter's eyes I can see the future  
A reflection of who I am and what will be  
Though she'll grow and someday leave  
Maybe raise a family  
When I'm gone I hope you see  
How happy she made me  
For I'll be there  
In my daughter's eyes

Although you didn't give birth to her, Lyra was your only child. She made you into a mother and you couldn't protect her, she faded away from you since she moved in with Eleanor.