

The Monster is Cancer

Number of players	4-9
Number of organizers	2
Length	3 hours 45 minutes
Recommended age	18 years
Authors	Andreas Markehed

A drama/thriller for 5-9 players. The scenario relies heavily on lighting, sound and special effects to create a feeling of vulnerability and dread for what's about to come.

The players will be confined to a circle in the middle of the room, the rest of it will be covered in darkness, hiding who knows what.

Story

This is a story about the people close to a cancer patient. Hope will be mixed in with fear about an uncertain future. It's partly played out as an allegory with a monster stalking a "cursed" victim and the rituals their loved ones have to go through to have a hope of curing the sick. The larp will end in one of two ways. One alternative is that the "beast" takes its toll and the person dies. The other is that they beat "the monster", cancer, and can go back to living a more normal life.

Program description for CPH Blackbox

They have sought out the dark cave to break the curse their friend is under. A monster haunts them. They can hear its roars echoing throughout the caverns. All that protects the Cursed from the beast is a candle, a circle of salt, and some magic words, or chemo, radiation therapy, and support from loved ones. This is a story about cancer and the journey of hope and despair that the people around someone afflicted by it goes through. Just like it's out there in the real world, the end isn't predetermined. You'll experience friendship, despair and fear along the way.

Props

- Sound system (bonus if it's powerful and surround)
- Positional spotlight (bonus if adjustable strength and color)
- Smoke machine (preferably low fog)
- Name badges
- Salt/coconut flour
- At least 5 electric candles
- A lock of fake hair
- Matches
- Fake blood
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Tape (suitable to cover cracks where light can get in)
- Charms (half occult charms and half medical looking devices)
- Climbing chalk
- Sponges filled with fake blood

- One set of occult robes
- One set of doctor's robes
- A vacuum cleaner (to get that coconut flakes of the floor)

Setup

- Start by covering up cracks in doors or windows where light can get in.
- Set up the spotlight. Try to get it pointing at a place that's as much in the center of the room as possible, creating a circle with a diameter of 3 meters.
- If possible, try to aim the speakers towards the center of the circle.
- Set up the organizer space. Preferably within view of the circle but not so close as you can easily be seen. Try to not show too much light from monitors visible from the circle.
- Place the fog machine in a way that you get good coverage. Be sure to cover the way from the organizer area to where the salt circle will be placed.

Using special effects

This scenario relies heavily on special effects that will sometimes be used dynamically when the situation demands it, and sometimes at set points in the story.

Music

Be sure to have a good array of music to fit the situation. Get a program that allows you to fade between tracks. Try to get some eerie music to mix with one or two more intensive tracks. It's better to get a few good ones that fit together.

<http://tabletopaudio.com>

Sound effects

Get your hands on some good horror effects and put them in as you see fit. Rattling chains, creaking doors and monster roars. After a while you can add in hospital and medical sounds. There will also be a few situations when a certain sound effect is needed. If that is the case it will be stated in the description of that event. Use the directional sound if you have the opportunity to do so, especially if the monster is making sounds.

Microphone

A microphone set up to the speakers.

Fog machine

Use it as you see fit. Avoid using it when you want to show the players something in the room. You can also use low fog if available.

Spotlights

All you really need is one spotlight, but you could benefit from more. Try to get one that focuses on a small area so it doesn't reveal too much of the area outside of the salt circle. If you want to

intensify the scene you can dim or flicker the light. It's preferable if you can change the light or have different colored ones to reflect the mood.

Backlights

Use a strong backlight preferably red and some kind of mask with horns to create a dark silhouette of the monster.

LED lights

You can use a couple of red LED-light to simulate red eyes visible through the fog. Be sure that it's dark enough so you aren't too visible.

Mechanics

Phrasing

Frail - Incorporate the words frail if you want to intensify the play. You could for example use "You look so frail". This acts as a clue for both the organizers and the other players. Just remember that the organizers might be busy with setup so we might not be able to respond at the time.

Stable - Use the word stable if you want to slow the game down a bit. An example could be "Don't worry they are stable for now." As with frail this acts as a clue for both the organizers and the other players.

There's somewhere else I need to be - Use this if you need a break and leave the circle for whatever reason. It's ok to take a break or just leave if you need to. The larp will go on anyway, so don't worry. It would be appreciated if you make the organiser aware if you're taking a break or leaving.

The Circle

The circle and the light in it's the only thing protecting you from whatever is out there. Moving out of the circle is not allowed unless someone needs to get out of the game.

The Life Mechanic

The players can do certain things to increase The Cursed chances of survival. If they complete the rituals, you can add a functional match. They are then mixed in with 5 extinguished matches. At the end, a match is drawn by one of the players. If it's working, The Cursed will live, if not, they'll die. Light a spotlight if the Cursed lives and a light "at the end of the tunnel" light if they die. Feel free to add or subtract matches for things the participants do. As a general rule the more they sacrifice the more matches are added.

Schedule

- Introduction - 5 minutes
- Workshops - 65 minutes
 - Trust building - 10 minutes
 - Safety - 5 minutes
 - Read characters - 5 minutes
 - Spotlight - 10 minutes
 - Values scale - 5 minutes
 - Phrasing and the circle - 5 minutes
 - Relationships - 5 minutes
 - A final goodbye - 20 minutes
 - The stalking - 5 minutes
- Acts - 115 minutes
 - Intro - 5 minutes
 - Act 1 - 20 minutes
 - Act 2 - 45 minutes
 - Act 3 - 30 minutes
 - The Verdict - 10 minutes
- Debrief - 30 minutes

Introduction

This larp started to form after I talked to my father about his fight with cancer. This was several years after he got cleared. It was only then that he told me that the odds of him surviving it was less than 50/50. He didn't want to worry his children, so they said that the outlook was good. A very typical move for my father. It's said that traumatic events bring out the best and worst in relationships.

I'm sure that a few of you here have encountered cancer up close, most of us will sooner or later in life. We will explore the fear surrounding cancer. The traumatic experience of having a loved one get sick can bring us together, but also complicates relationships. It will be told through the metaphor of a monster stalking someone who's been inflicted by a curse. Over time things will get more familiar and the monster might seem more familiar, less alien.

- Exactly when and where this takes place is not important. You are free to make things up. This is a metaphor after all.
- We will start with a few workshops, then you'll get your characters. After that we will workshop some more. This time with more character focus.
- The larp will be split into three acts with a different focus. Act breaks will be signaled by the light going out. Use that time to reflect on yourself and where you're right then and there.
- You'll get an introduction at the start of each act.
- Between each act an undetermined amount of time has elapsed. How much time that is can be adjusted to fit the story in a specific relationship.

Act 1 will focus on the uncertainty of the cave you're in. An unknown place filled with the fear of a strange monster stalking around. Talk to each other about your fears and past.

In Act 2 you can do what you can to handle the situation you're in. Find comfort in each other. There are things you can do to improve the Cursed chances of survival, but they are costly in some manner.

In Act 3 you do what you can to prepare yourself for the future. Think about what will change if your friend dies. Regardless of the outcome, it will soon be time to leave the cave and return to the world.

Workshops

Trust building

Everyone stands in a close ring. Then the players take turns standing in the middle, closing their eyes and doing trust falls. Start really close and if you feel comfortable you can expand the circle.

Safety

Frail - Incorporate the word "frail" if you want to intensify the play. You could for example use "You look so frail". This acts as a clue for both the organizers and the other players. Just remember that the organizers might be busy with setup so we might not be able to respond at the time.

Stable - Use the word stable if you want to slow the game down a bit. An example could be "Don't worry they are stable for now." As with frail this acts as a clue for both the organizers and the other players.

There's somewhere else I need to be - Use this if you need a break and leave the circle for whatever reason. It's ok to take a break or just leave if you need to. The larp will go on anyway, so don't worry. It would be appreciated if you make the organiser aware if you're taking a break or leaving.

Read characters

Hand out the characters as you see fit. If they feel like they want to change they can do so. All characters are gender neutral and are just called by their relationship to the Cursed or something special about them. Allow for a few short questions if needed.

Understanding characters

- **You** - Background to your character and your relationship to The Cursed. You don't need to remember details. Use it to get a feeling for who you are.
- **Hard decisions** - This is a big question for you. What you decide will change your life. What you decide is up to you. There is often a concrete thing that can be performed to mark the change.

- **The others** - You all know each other in some way. You don't need to remember everything about everyone and you're allowed to take a peek at your sheet during the larp. Feel free to add details about your relationship. Try to roll with what your co-players come up with. We are creating this together.

Spotlight

Turn on a spotlight. Now everyone gets a turn to state who they are and at max two sentences about yourself.

- Add the pronoun you've decided for your character and check it on your name badges.
- Start by saying your character's name and their pronoun.
- Continue with a couple of sentences about yourself.
- You'll also have a monologue at the end of the larp where you as your character have a chance to say goodbye and say something about their future.
- After you are finished you'll leave the circle until everyone is finished with their monologue.
- The Cursed will then call you back into the circle and the fate of the Cursed will be decided.

Start by presenting yourself as the Cursed.

I'm him, the Cursed and the reason why you're all here. The monster scares me and I'm not ready to go, but having you here helps.

Value scale

Assign one direction as high and one as low. Try to form a half circle instead of a line to make it easier to see everyone.

- Who has been with The Cursed the longest.
- Who sees the Cursed most often?
- How voluntary is your relationship?
- How dependent are you on the Cursed?

Relationships

Start by dividing up the group in age groups. Secondly direct blood relations to the cursed. Thirdly, present the characters who faced the beast themselves.

A final goodbye

Find a partner. If you end up with more than two persons that is all right. You'll now have the chance to talk for a couple of minutes about your relationship. You can search for answers to these questions.

- Start with how you greet each other? Do you hug or shake hands? What do you say?
- What do you do when you see each other?
- Come up with one special memory you've had together.

- How do you say farewell? Do you talk about when you'll see each other next?

The rites

Have them enter the circle and show them the "ritual equipment".

- During the game you'll perform rituals to ward off the monster.
- Don't be afraid to improvise when performing rituals. It's ok however they turn out. Try to involve the other players and to make it active participation.
- Your characters can object to how high the cost of the rituals are, but not if they are done correctly. The outcome will only be known at the end of the larp.
- If you're using chalk or blood, be sure to ask first if you're putting it on someone other than yourself. Use the material here as you see fit.
- You'll get some guidelines on what you can do during play. Don't do anything drastic until the start of act two. When the doctor enters the high priest enters the circle.

One guide you should try to follow is that the rites should change you physically, visually or mentally. Examples can be:

- Smear your face in ash and then chalc to symbolise your lack of sleep.
- Tie a bell to your body forcing you to move slowly to not alert the beast.
- Give a promise to never lie again.

The stalking

Place everyone spread out around the room and close their eyes. A representation of the monster will go through the room seeking prey. To make it pass you by, you repeat a prayer or mantra of your choosing and make yourself as small as possible hugging yourself.

Walk around the room carrying a portable speaker playing monster sounds and roars. Put some scary music and footsteps on the big speakers and turn up the base. Use something that smells strongly and a spray bottle with water to simulate monster saliva. Go from person to person and change if they make themselves small and use mantras. Finish up when you've passed by everyone at least once.

Scenario structure

The scenario is structured around rituals/treatment. At the beginning, an NPC comes in to give the players ingame instructions. Try to show what they can do without going out of the game. It's totally ok if they don't do it right.

To players

The game is divided into three acts. The time scale is not important. Some undetermined time will have passed between each act.

- Act 1 - The Cave: Waiting for more news and handling the growing fear of the unknown.
- Act 2 - The Rites: Do what you can to handle the situation you're in. Find comfort in each other.

- Act 3 - The Promise: Do what you can to prepare yourself for the future whatever that may be.

Intro

Not everyone is lucky. The fate of the fictive person in this story is not predetermined. You won't know until the end what will happen. There is no predetermined outcome.

You got the message. One of the people you care most about in life has been marked by the monster. They have fled to the sacred cave that's watched over by high priests and acolytes. It's their only chance of survival. This is a place full of horrors, but it's the only place with presents a semblance of hope.

Around you, you have others in the same position as yourself. Some you know well, others only as friends or family of the Cursed. The fear and hope for the future of a person that means a lot to you.

Right now, all you can do is wait. Your time will come. There are rites to be performed and promises to be made.

Act 1 - The cave

The Cursed enters the circle and shows them the mark of the beast/birthmark.

"They say that it doesn't look good. I can hear its roar already. I'm scared. The priests say that this is the safest place, that many elude the beast. This cave has powerful wards to keep the monster at bay. But I've seen others that have been devoured. They were tired of running. It takes its time to stalk its prey. Now we wait and see what can be done. The priests say that they are interpreting the omens and preparing the rituals. I love you no matter what, remember that. All you can do right now is wait. Your time will come."

Start some high volume monster sounds, flicker the light and activate the smoke machine.

Act 2 -The rites

The high priest/doctor comes to inform them of the three rites that they can perform to satiate the beast's hunger. It has already corrupted the flesh and now it has sunk its teeth in them. They had to cut them loose.

The Blood

There is power in blood and the strongest is the blood of the family, for good and bad. Blood is the life force, and blood spilt for someone else has always been powerful. Words written in blood can protect and keep you safe. Take the knife from the bowl and write words to strengthen The Cursed or ward off the beast. Your blood into them. You'll be tired but they'll get a chance at life.

Blood transfusion and the willingness to sacrifice. The high priest carries a staff with a blood bag attached to it.

The Ash

The Cursed have already shed their hair. There is power in that destruction. It's necessary for change. Like the phoenix rises. Ash and the fire it comes from is a force of destruction. By destroying yourself and turning yourself as pale as the burnt forest after a firestorm, the monster might pass you by. Take the ash and paint yourself with it. The more of you who are willing to fade and let your life be drained the more power there is in the ritual.

A sign of how physically taxing cancer can be and how it affects both the afflicted and to a lesser degree people close to them.

The Contract

The doctor comes with what looks like half of a medical bill and half a contract. The doctor leaves a pen with red ink to sign with.

The ritual is more complicated than we expected. This cave is equipped with the best charms, guardians and ways of treatment our world has, but it's very costly. You'll have to give up a lot, but we can help you. What it comes down to is if you're willing to sell your future, your soul, to a guardian. I'll leave you to think about it.

Even if we are lucky enough to live in a society with universal healthcare, it still taxes us. Time of work and education put on hold will put a strain on your life.

Act 3 - The Promise

The word is strong, especially those given earnestly to a person who might not be with you for long. Think about something you're willing to sacrifice. Give them a promise. When you feel that the time is right, speak your words on what you're willing to change or give up. Start with the words "By the sacred light I Promise." This is a signal for you all to stay quiet and listen. By the sacred light I promised my father that I would help people that had been cursed. I put down the artist's brush and picked up ceremonial robes and dagger. With pain and joy I gave up on my big dream to save others so that their dreams would not end."

This is a classic chance for a monologue to express the characters' conflict about the future and things that might change because of the illness and possible loss.

The Verdict

The final rites, the final diagnosis. We have done all we can. Now it's time. Draw your lot and decide for the future. There is no monster, only a body ravaged by sickness. There are things we do and things we don't but in the end it's mostly chance. Take your time and pick a match. That's it. This is what it all comes down to.

If they take a working match: *I made it, the monster, cancer, lost and you won. Take the light and leave the hospital to go back to your life. Some things have changed but much stays the same. It will take some time to adjust after you've faced death head on. All of you'll leave this place*

changed. When you brush up against death and can feel its breath, things will change, and that is okay. This trial is over but there are many other monsters to fight out there.

If they take a burnt out match: I didn't make it. I fought long and hard, but in the end my body just couldn't take it. The pain will be gone and I don't have to fight a losing battle any more. Your loved ones are with you and you still have some time to say goodbye before the light goes out. There will be a hole where they once were, they will be remembered. There's sadness over the times you didn't have, but also a warmth when you remember the times you had together.

The doctor/death comes in with their fate in the form of used and unused matches together with a candle. The Cursed has to draw from a number of matches to light the candle that will give them a light to take out from the circle. If no match is drawn the light slowly fades.

Debrief

Inform everyone that the debrief is fully optional.

- Start by sitting everyone down, let them present themselves with name and off game pronouns.
- Ask if anyone needs anything right now.
- Sit down in a circle and start talking about your experience from the larp.
- Take turns saying up to the three things that they'll take from the larp or thoughts they had.
- Inform about where you can find support groups.
- Keep talking more loosely with those who want it.

Characters

The scenario has a minimum number of participants. More are added in order.

Core characters

1. The Medium
2. The Scarred
3. The Lover
4. The Past
5. The Child

Expanded characters

6. The Parent
7. The Sibling
8. The Spared
9. The Mentor

Relationship map

The Medium (Acolyte, Best friend)

You've spent years as an acolyte in the sacred cave. This is not the first curse you've witnessed. During your time here you've seen many poor souls be devoured. The first ones hit you hard, but it's easier now, even though everyone who succumbs to the monster leaves a mark. You've also helped save people. The beast's mark can fade, and the monster can lose your trail. You've learnt to be the calm voice people need in hard times.

Now it's different, personal. It's your best friend. You knew the Cursed from before they became marked. Their house was your second home growing up. It was a safe haven when your parents fought or drank. There you could be the child you couldn't be at home. It was only in your late teens when you moved away from home that you got your life together. You know that some doubted that you would become anything. You try to prove them wrong.

Hard decisions

- They expect you to be professional and keep it together. Do you need to be strong for others all the time? Can you allow yourself to see to your needs, show yourself vulnerable, cry and just be held for a little while?

The others

- **The Scarred** - The one who made you devote your life to be an acolyte. A friend you met here in the cave. They stood strong, and defeated the beast. You were by their side and kept in touch afterwards.
- **The Lover** - You introduced the Lover, your childhood friend, to the Cursed. They became a couple. They are great together, even if they have not been together long. You just hope that the love they have is worth the pain of seeing someone they love suffer.
- **The Past** - You were friends even back when they and the Cursed were together. After they broke up you introduced the Lover to the Cursed. You wonder if it was too soon. The wounds were still fresh. But you knew that the Cursed needed someone.
- **The Child** - You know you should care about them, and you try. You also have separated parents with issues, but you have a hard time relating to children. You try to be a shield against their problems, but you can't handle their emotions very well.
- **The Parent** - Their house has always been a second home to you. When your parents fought or drank this was your safe harbor. You would not have made it to the place you are now without them.
- **The Spared** - You know that they are forever cursed. You've seen it before. The monster will be back for them one day even if it's lost their trace. The others don't know and as an acolyte you're sworn to secrecy. But this is outside of your role as a devotee.
- **The Mentor** - Many talk about what a great influence they had on them, but the Mentor didn't care for you. They saw you as nothing more than trouble. But look at you now. You've made something of yourself.
- **The Sibling** - You played and fought a lot when you were young. The words "You're not our real sibling" said in anger still stings. You see each other and have fun, especially when the Cursed is along, but those words still hurt.

The Scarred (Survivor, Friend)

The beast left its black mark on you. You were cursed and so afraid. Now it has come to take one of your best friends. One you knew all the way back from your teens. You hope the ritual will be successful, but you also know how hard it can be to get through it. It took all the strength you had. You're not sure you can relive the hardships of the ritual in the cave again. Your heartbeat pounds in your ears as you enter the caverns. The sacred ash caking your skin and the blood poured out is still fresh in your mind. When you hear the roar of the monster, you still get the feeling that it's closing in on you.

The Cursed were there for you then, when others who should have been were not. Sometimes you wish they hadn't, now you have to do the same for them. They sacrificed their blood for you. That's the reason you're here now. People call you a hero for surviving, but if death was the alternative, what choice did you have? What you did does not make you brave.

Hard decisions

- The presence of the others and how they see you if you left is the only thing that keeps you here. Will you tell them the truth? You're here, that is what counts right?

The others

- **The Medium** - You met here in the cave after you had been cursed. Your friend stood by your side and has continued doing so. They are a hero you wish you could be.
- **The Lover** - A dear friend, they grew distant when you got sick. They had a hard time tackling it. You can't blame them too much, you were hard to be around at times. You just hope they can be here now for the Cursed.
- **The Past** - The Cursed's former partner was there for you together with the Cursed, they put aside their troubled relationship and put up a smile for you. Because that's what they thought you needed. You're probably expected to do the same.
- **The Child** - A formerly naive little creature, a child for whom you could be the strong one. You helped with homework and played games of make believe. Even now you like to do things together, even if it's not make believe anymore.
- **The Parent** - They tried to instill hope in you. Sometimes it was a bit much, especially when you were sick. There was something almost desperate in the way they did it. Still, they were there for you.
- **The Spared** - A new acquaintance. You have fun, but there's a sadness hanging over them. They told you in confidence that the monster would be back for them. You wanted to say something profound or comforting. But you couldn't find the words.
- **The Mentor** - You saw each other at a festival. Your eyes lingered a bit longer than usual. It's not often you feel butterflies in your stomach while also feeling safe and totally comfortable in someone's presence. The age difference might have something to do with it.
- **The Sibling** - A typical younger child, used to be catered to. Now they need to step up for their sibling. You're not sure they have it in them though. They have something to prove.

The Lover

You've been here before. Your sibling The Spared got marked. They only told you after they were recovering. You were both angry and relieved. The pleading from other cursed echoing through the cave scares you even now. Back then you would not have been able to handle it. You're still not sure that you can.

You're in love, but the monster might take that love from you. The candle light of your romantic dinners have changed for the faint light of candles in this dark, damp place. It's hard, your partner has always been the strong one, the adventurous one. A lot of the faces around you are new. You've met them but not much. Even though their faces are kind you feel their expectant gazes on you. As the partner of a cursed you're expected to act in a certain way, but to you it feels like a field full of hidden traps.

Hard decisions

- Your fight or flight instincts tell you to run. But that's not what you're supposed to do when someone you love has been marked. Is this the time to fight, to endure? It's so hard to separate your own feelings from other people's expectations of you.

The others

- **The Medium** - One of your childhood friends. They introduced you to your great love at a party. You feel that you can open your heart to them without fear of judgement.
- **The Scarred** - Your best friends since a few years back. Their fight with the curse was taxing. You were there, but not for the worst of it.
- **The Past** - You met the Cursed soon after they divorced and have heard about all of the darker sides of them. That image has softened somewhat over time. You know that the wounds of separation were still raw. You feel a bit threatened by them having spent so long with someone you love, even though you probably shouldn't.
- **The Child** - You first saw them as a picture on your partner's nightstand. It's always a bit strange when you think that your partner has a child that isn't yours and that they are almost your own age.
- **The Parent** - You have a good relationship even if it was a bit strained in the beginning. Now you even meet up just the two of you. You just fear that you'll always be the second one after the Past, regardless of how much you try to fit in.
- **The Spared** - There is such sadness hanging over your sibling. You just want to hug them and tell them everything will be alright, whatever it's, like they have done so many times to you. Seeing them down at a time like this makes things harder. But just having them here is a comfort. They have been the solid pillar in your life.
- **The Mentor** - They don't like you. Or at least not your influence on The Cursed. Maybe this is the time to prove yourself. But then again why should you care. It's just that the one you love has such respect for them.
- **The Sibling** - They are almost like they are the sibling you never had. You tease and joke, regardless of what happens you hope that it will stay that way. Some would say that they joke around too much, but sometimes you just need to smile.

The Past

The fights were bad. You punched walls and they threw cups and plates. Thinking back at it, you feel ashamed. Your kid was right there. There was just a thin door separating you and them. It's not who you wanted to be, but you were both young, poor and going through some hard times. You were not ready, but you tried.

You loved each other, but drifted apart. You were both to blame. Sometimes you regret that you didn't try harder to stay together. You still see each other, but it's mostly on formal occasions. Sometimes there's a glimpse of what you had. The child you raised is all grown up now, and there's a lot of good things there that you recognise from your former partner.

Hard decisions

- You've not been able to move on, not truly. When you were young you said to yourself that you wouldn't be one of those that got married and divorced, but here you are. Is it time to let go, and take off the wedding band?

The others

- **The Medium** - As soon as you were out of the picture they introduced the Cursed to someone else. You know you shouldn't, but you feel betrayed.
- **The Scarred** - At the endpoint of your relationship with the Cursed, the Scarred got sick. It felt good to unite and help someone else. For a while you and the Cursed were a team with the same goal again.
- **The Lover** - When things didn't work out for you and the Cursed they were soon there. At the time you were bitter and resentful even though you know that wasn't fair to them. You've tried to form at least a formal relationship.
- **The Child** - Your child. They make you smile and grit your teeth, but in the end you'll love them unconditionally. Your gut feeling is to protect them from the worst of it. They don't need to hear how bad it's. Let's cross that bridge if you get there.
- **The Parent** - You always got along great, and still do. Sometimes you feel like your former partner thinks it's a bit weird. You used to make little jokes about them. You might be the two in the world who know the Cursed best. Both of you've seen them at their best and worst.
- **The Spared** - You've been through thick and thin. They lent you money when you were a young parent. Later you drove them to every chemotherapy session when they were sick. You feel like you can tell them anything and they'll still accept you.
- **The Mentor** - They were there to mediate when things were at their worst. A referee to make sure that no one got hurt when you and The Cursed fought. You have them to thank that you're still talking. At the same time you feel that they judge you for not being able to put your differences aside and think of your child.
- **The Sibling** - They were the shaggy haired kid that always wanted to hang out with their bigger sibling and their partner. You knew they looked up to you. That meant that you had to act like a good role model. It made you a better person.

The Parent

You should have felt something. Some kind of tingling down your spine to warn you that the beast was coming. You were young when your parent passed away, but you remember having nightmares about monsters before you got the news. You didn't get any warning this time. You try to tell yourself that it's good news. No parent should outlive their children.

You know they'll be fine. You can just feel it. It's not their time. The curse might have come through you, one of your parents got taken by the beast. It's not fair. You also hope that your other child won't have to face the same monster. You'll be there for them all in sickness and in health.

Hard decisions

- You have a hard time facing the possibility of your child dying. You avoid it by repeatedly telling yourself that everything will be fine. Can you say out loud that your child might die?

The others

- **The Medium** - They had a troubled childhood. You feared they would go the same way as their parents. They were consumed by bitterness and alcoholism. That they turned out decent in the end makes you happy.
- **The Scarred** - A smile is what people need in hard situations. You try to think forward. You made plans together for what you would do when the monster lost their trail. That you now get a chance to fulfill them makes you happy.
- **The Lover** - You get along well with your kiddos new partner. You see them as a friend. At the same time, you know that they are on their best behaviour. It feels a bit forced. You wonder if your friendship would be strong enough to stand on its own.
- **The Past** - One of your best friends. You have known them since they were a teenager and bonded over the quirks of the Cursed. You believe that you'll stay friends, and be there for the Cursed regardless of what the future brings.
- **The Child** - Your grandchild. You see a lot of your kid in them. They are just packaged in a more modern setting. Just seeing them makes you smile, but there's also dread at what the future might bring. It's almost too hard to think about.
- **The Spared** - A good influence on your children. They always had an old soul. Even as a child they behaved in a way that was more adult than you. You just wished they would allow themselves to relax a bit more.
- **The Mentor** - Your best friend and godparent to your children. Even when you lived far apart you were always close. They helped raise your children and are almost as responsible for raising them as you are. Their decisiveness has always had a calming effect on you.
- **The Sibling** - They were always the fragile one. Youngest of your children. You spent many sick days taking care of them. If anyone would get chosen by the monster you thought it would be them. Maybe it's better this way. They would probably not be strong enough to make it.

The Child

You heard them argue, loud shouting, punctured by the sharp crack from plates being broken. They argued almost every night. Even after they divorced they continued. Now they fought over you. You wished for something to stop their fighting. It came true. The dragon's roar drowns out the sound of any fighting. You've even seen them smile at each other.

They don't think you're old enough to handle this. So when talking to you wrap every piece of news in soft pillows. You're not a kid anymore, just old enough to drink. You don't need a pillowfort to protect you from the outside, but this is no monster under the bed, and you're no knight. This is the hardest battle you ever witnessed. Hearing your parents argue from the comfort of your room is nothing compared to the dragon they are facing now.

Hard decisions

- You came to them and they comforted you. Is this the time to grow up and be there to hold someone else while they cry?

The others

- **The Medium** - A friend of your parents. Always a bit distant. They were never the one who played with you. As you get older you have started to see how they helped you in other ways. Not only did they give you good advice, they also got you your first internship and helped you with moving.
- **The Scarred** - They played with you, painted a world with fantastic colors. Your parents sometimes fault them for your tendencies to daydream. Those were some memories but you've never really talked about heavy stuff.
- **The Lover** - You have a hard time seeing them as a partner to your parent. They are much younger than your parents and too much like you. A bit irresponsible. Isn't that supposed to be your role?
- **The Past** - They have always protected you through everything. You knew your parents fought and probably stayed together longer than they should have. They shielded you from the worst of it.
- **The Parent** - You always thought they would go before any of your parents. They have always been there to make you smile, but you know how fragile they are. Now when you're older you've stopped telling them about the hard stuff in life. You know how hard they'll take it.
- **The Spared** - One of the best friends to both of your parents. They were there as a somber voice of reason and to give them a break from each other when they needed it. It feels like they have a sadness lingering over them.
- **The Mentor** - The age difference has always been palpable. You know they helped raise the Cursed, but to you they have mostly seemed as a stern authority. Makes you wonder what kind of life your parent lived if they needed that kind of guidance.
- **The Sibling** - Your parent's younger sibling. They fill the cliché of a younger sibling. They rolled in with new toys, a smile and ready to have fun. At the same time it's not someone you would go to with a serious problem. It's just not who they are.

The Spared

In some way you're living proof that you can elude the monster. It gives some people hope. You like having that ability, even if you don't necessarily think that you did anything to deserve it. The alternative would have been to give up, and that was never an option. You'd like to think that fighting made you stronger, and that is how you want to see yourself.

You've stood face-to-face with the monster and got spared. At least for now. But you know that it will be back for you one day. You never told the Cursed, even though they are one of your best friends. Like an idiot they would have stopped caring about themselves to fix your problem, a problem that can't be fixed. It felt awkward when you told the few people who you revealed it to. You go from being a living person to a victim to be pitied.

Hard decisions

- Maybe it's time to let your guard down. You've been fighting for so long. You're tired. Maybe it's time to tell people, to admit that you're afraid of what will happen when the monster comes back for you?

The others

- **The Medium** - They know that the kind of curse you have won't go away. The beast has marked you permanently. You don't think they have told anyone else. As an acolyte they are sworn to secrecy. You can tell people on your own terms.
- **The Scarred** - A new acquaintance that you've a lot in common with. Both of you have been through a lot. You told them that the beast would come back for you one day. It got quiet and awkward. Neither of you had any good words to say.
- **The Lover** - Your younger sibling. Even though you haven't told them that you're marked, they look at you with pity. You don't need those worried looks, but sometimes you could use a hug. You don't want to look weak, you can't stand it.
- **The Past** - One of your best friends. They have been with you since forever. It was you against the world, and you against the monster. But you've not told them that the beast is back for you. You tell yourself that you were waiting for the right moment, but that moment hasn't materialized.
- **The Parent** - You've never said so, but The Cursed and The Sibling were lucky to have other adults in their life. If not they would have run rampant. They tried their best, but could never say no to anything. Kindness only gets you so far.
- **The Child** - The last month's of their relationship when The Past and The Cursed fought you were there to give them a break for each other. This gave their child a break from their parents acting passive aggressive or screaming at each other.
- **The Mentor** - A listening ear that never judged you. Always ready with advice for you and your friends when you were growing up. Stern when needed, but always fair. They have done a lot to make The Cursed into a good person.
- **The Sibling** - They have been around for as long as you have known the Cursed. They were fun and made an effort to bring you joy. Always ready with a joke and a smile. It might be a coping mechanism, but there are worse ones out there.

The Mentor

People say that blood is thicker than water, but water can be pretty thick as well. You were there before the Cursed was born, and got the honor of being appointed as their godparent. Sometimes you think that your relationship might mean more than if you had just been related. You two chose to maintain your relationship and that means something.

You've always been seen as a serious person. Sometimes it's to your benefit, and sometimes it has been a burden. It's a sign of the times you were born in. You were expected to not show many feelings in public.

Hard decisions

- Times have changed. Maybe it's time to show yourself vulnerable? Can you do that without people being disappointed? Do they need to see you at the pillar of stability you often present yourself as or can you let your guard down?

The others

- **The Medium** - A troubled child who was friends with the Cursed. You always thought they would move or run away as a teen so you didn't pay much attention. Turns out you were wrong.
- **The Scarred** - There's something between you. It feels both right and kind of wrong. Even though they are an adult, you could be their parent. The cave is the wrong place for this. People die here. But you're tired of being alone and would like to just hold someone's hand, for comfort if nothing else.
- **The Lover** - They are flimsy. In times like this you wished they found someone stronger. The Cursed needs stability and you'll try to give them that. They should hold it together and take their responsibility as a supporting partner.
- **The Past** - You were there to mediate when they and The Cursed fought. You saw the patterns as you had gone through the same yourself with a former partner. It ended badly, even though you were both good people. But they have a child and should have put them first.
- **The Child** - They are a child of their generation, used to a softer hand. Kids these days are different, and it makes you feel old. Maybe it's all for the best. You know that their parents did a good job when they weren't fighting.
- **The Parent** - You've been best friends for as long as you can remember. They have never been the best at saying no or setting boundaries, so you often did it for them. In response they took care of you and picked you up when you were down.
- **The Spared** - They were always the responsible one in the Cursed's circle of friends. They remind you of a younger version of yourself, or at least the person you want to portray yourself as.
- **The Sibling** - Your youngest godchild that you would do almost anything for. You've spent many evenings babysitting them and lolling them to sleep. It was you who talked to them when needed rules and structure.

The Sibling

When you were young, you often got sick. The Parent kept you home from school a lot. School was never easy, you had a hard time keeping pace with you being away a lot. Your sibling the Cursed was there to protect you. They were the strong one, the ones who got you through the worst of it. Now the roles have been reversed.

The feeling of weakness lingers even now even though you're physically fine. Whatever problem you have is nothing compared to what your sibling is going through. Your usual coping mechanic of making jokes feels a bit stale. It just hides your problems.

Hard decisions

- Maybe this is the time to step up and be the strong one. But how do you do it without being ingenious? It's not really who you are or at least have been up until now. You've never really been in this situation before.

The others

- **The Medium** - You had a bit of sibling rivalry going on. Even though they say that blood is thicker than water, this water is pretty thick. They got you into a lot of trouble, but you learned a lot from it.
- **The Scarred** - You feel that they expect you to step up for your sibling. To take a step back from your role as the younger sibling. It's hard. You'll do your best, but this is new to you and you need some time to adjust.
- **The Lover** - A friend you feel you could have needed during your childhood. You're the same age and have the same crude kind of humor. Their smile can make your day. But if you're honest, you're not sure that your friendship would survive if your sibling died. A smile just won't cut it.
- **The Past** - A few years older than you. They were always the cool partner to your sibling. They even defended you from your bigger sibling. When they broke up after their bitter fighting something changed. They went from an idol to a human, and you think that made your relationship better for it.
- **The Parent** - You know they love you. They have always taken care of you, sometimes a bit too much. You were often sick as a child. Or at least they told you so. Now you wonder if it was exaggerated. They wanted someone to take care of, and you liked the attention.
- **The Child** - Until you have children of your own you'll spoil your sibling's kid. You love to see their smile when they get new toys or get treated to some sweets. I also gave you joy to know that spoiling them pissed off your older sibling.
- **The Spared** - You always tried to impress them, and still do. They have always been what you wanted to be. Someone to be taken seriously. Even when young they treated them with respect.
- **The Mentor** - A stern but fair voice throughout life. They taught you a lot about life and values. Without them you would probably be somewhat of a spoiled brat. You didn't always appreciate it when younger, but you see it differently now.