SILENT MEMORIES

A roleplaying game about finding out
who you are before you die

Written by
Chad Wattler

Edited by
Adam Gottfried & Chuck Wills

Graphic Design by
Michal E. Cross

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are a couple of people I'd like to thank and acknowledge as without them this would not have happened.

Epidiah Ravachol, the guy who came up with the idea of using a *Jenga* tower as a diceless mechanic in an RPG with his game *Dread*. He's also made several other interesting games. Check him out at: dig1000holes.wordpress.com

Adam Gottfried, my editor who printed this out and marked it red crayon. I would love to see that copy. Thanks for the help man!

Chuck Wills, my other editor who edited this while we played Civ. V together. Apparently it takes 1026 years to edit this game.

Also, thanks to LWN who said the game of SM I ran for her was the best she ever played in and then gave me a hug. This rendered me speechless for a moment and that is no small feat.

All of the people who took a chance and let me run this game for them at various cons over the years. I cannot possibly remember all of your names but thank you all!

LEGAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

• INTRODUCTION •

Silent Memories is a game where mystery and the unknown are key parts of the experience. The players do not know who they are, what is going on, or what their part is. Discovering these things while under extreme pressure is the core concept of the game. Most of this document is going to be the rules needed along with ideas and advice for the Game Master (GM for short) on how to run the game. What follows is a game-pitch so you can get an idea what the game is about.

You awaken from a cryogenic sleep aboard a spaceship with no knowledge of who you are or how you came to be here. You have no knowledge of your mission, or even where you are going. All that remains is your training, and the impending sense that something is very wrong.

This is a science fiction/horror game about trying to survive as you begin to piece your memories back together. As the dangers increase, so too do the recollections of your past. Unfortunately what you recall may affect your trust of the people around you or even trust in yourself. Ultimately, one may be revealed to be something evil.

The premise is simple: You are on a spaceship and get awoken from cryogenic sleep. Due to the process you have lost your memories of who you are. You remember the specifics of your training as they have been conditioned into you for just such an occasion. The players will be able to choose what their role is at the start of the game. This will confer a few abilities to them. As the game progresses you will be required to pull blocks from a *Jenga* tower. The harder or more dangerous the task, the more blocks you will be asked to pull, usually between one and three blocks. For every block you pull, you are given a slip of paper. On those slips of paper is a memory of yours that shook loose under the pressure of the situation. It could be anything from the mundane, to plot relevant, to a touch of madness due to the stress. It might even be some useful object you happen to find in your pocket, long forgotten.

If and when the tower falls then the person who knocked it down will be pulled aside and given an envelope. They have just regained all of their memories and they know who they are now. Their personality might be different, they might treat other people on the team differently, and, most importantly, their motivations and goals have now drastically changed. Those goals might even run counter to the goals of the rest of the group. If it's all done right then the whole game has changed for everyone. Just remember that while you know they have regained their memories your character does not. At this point on the tower is reset and knocking it over means bad things happen.

And that's it. Simple enough right?

• Part 1 •
THE RULES

CHARACTERS

The characters start the game with nothing. They have no stats and the players have no sheets to record different aspects of their character on. While the player characters (called PCs from here on out) have a history and background they don't remember due to the cryogenic freezing process. Their memories slowly start to return as the game progresses and if nothing were amiss, their memories would have returned after a day or two normally. We'll get into the memoires of the PCs and how they are restored later.

Every PC has a job. They are part of the crew of the spaceship that they are on and they have had specialized training and conditioning that allows them to retain this job knowledge even after the freezing process. Each job grants the PCs an ability in game related to their profession and for most of them they get a few items.

Listed below are all of the jobs the PCs may choose:

Commander

The person who is in charge of the team. Knowledgeable of most systems on board, capable of authorizing execution of prime commands in the computer system, and has the ranking authority to make command decisions.

Medical Officer

The Medical Officer can heal wounds and bind injuries. He can also use the any of the scientific equipment on the ship and interpret its data. He has knowledge of a broad range of scientific disciplines. The Medical Officer has a doctor's bag filled with a variety of first aid supplies as well as various drugs from stimulants to antiseptics to anesthetics.

Engineer

The Engineer has the ability to fix machinery, open jammed bulkheads and doors, and repair the ship's engines (this last part is pretty important as you will see later). They also have a small basic tool kit consisting of various tools (hammers, saws, etc.).

Technician

The Technician has the ability to access computers and repair electronic systems. They can fix broken cameras and use the security systems to look through working ones as well as bypass electronic locks. They have a kit that contains micro-repair tools for fixing electronics as well as a tablet computer that can access some of the ship's systems once those are online.

Generalist

The Generalist can back up the Engineer, Technician, or the Medical Officer so that any one of them can do the others job of needs be. For example, if the Engineer is dead and the Technician is in a different part of the ship the Generalist and the Medical Officer can open a bulkhead if they work together. The Generalist has a tool kit that contains smaller versions of some of the tools the three other specialists have.

The Commander is in charge while the Medical Officer is second in command. The Engineer and the Technician hold the same rank and the Generalist is the lowest ranking member of the team. All of this should be easy for the players to figure out as the ranks appear on their uniforms or the GM can have them remember that detail.

THE PULL

The mechanic in *Silent Memories* uses the diceless system involving any block tower stacking game such as *Jenga* or *Ta-Ka-Radi*. This represents the growing danger in a very real and present way. As the tower destabilizes it helps the GM bring pressure on the players in a very visual way while the tension mounts. Whenever the players want to do something that is dangerous or risky, the GM will have them pull

one to three blocks depending on how difficult what they are doing is. If a player succeeds on their pull, it does not guarantee absolute success, but some semblance of their intention. A successful pull does not protect them from injury either, only from death and total failure. A player always has the option to opt out of a pull when after they hear how many blocks must be removed.

An example of a pull where the players would have general success along with some consequence would go something like this:

The Engineer is working on a water pump that is flooding a chamber the team is trapped in. It's difficult in the best of circumstances and with all that water, pressure, and electricity it's plenty dangerous too. The player says they want to fix the water pump and thus save their friends. The GM says that it's pretty risky so it'll be two pulls. At this point the Engineer player can opt out of pull. Perhaps the tower is too unstable and the player doesn't want to risk it; the rest of the team would have to figure a way out on their own. But for the sake of our example the Engineer goes for it. After a few tense moments the player pulls two from a rather shaky tower. There is an audible sigh from the table as people exhale from holding their breath during the pull. The GM then describes the water stopping but the old and broken machine bursting a large pipe next the Engineer blasting them off the ledge into the watery chamber below. The Engineer breaks two ribs in the process but survives as well as saving the rest of the team.

As you can see in the example the succeeding doesn't mean getting the maximum best result and walking away smelling like roses. Sometimes it just means not dying. This doesn't give the GM free reign to beat up the PCs every time they want to try something, but instead the GM needs to do what makes for a good, tense story and what fits within the framework of the game. Sometimes the players just want to succeed at a task so they can get to the interesting stuff, sometimes the feel of the story demands some blood, sweat, and tears. It's up to the GM to balance these things and the players to trust him to do so. I'll be going into this concept of trust later.

Pulls from the tower can also be for things that are seemingly mundane and safe to the players. Opening a door would be an example of this. While it's just a door to the players there might be someone or something waiting on the other side ready to pounce on them that they are unaware of. Having them pull to go in a door and not having anything on the other side is a bit of a tension breaker though. Pulls should indicate something happening, not the absence of action.

If a pull causes the tower to fall for the first time in the game, the player who made the pull succeeds in the action and is handed an envelope. The envelope contains The Truth and will be explained in Section IV. At this point the GM calls for a break while the player with The Truth reads the contents of their envelope and the GM rebuilds the tower. Once the game resumes anyone who knocks the tower down loses their PC. While that PC may have died in attempting whatever it was they were trying to do the rule about pulls being generally successful still applies. They might have died trying something but their attempt was not in vain.

The PC who has been granted The Truth can die just as easily as the rest of the players if they knock the tower over the second time. The Truth is not given out again.

MEMORIES

All of the characters are suffering from temporary amnesia due to the side effects of being frozen in cryogenic sleep. Given a few days of light duty and normal routine all of the subject's memories would return to normal with no side effects. Of course, this does not happen. As soon as the PCs are awoken there is an ongoing emergency and the situation is anything but normal.

Before the game the GM has slips of paper prepared that contain one to three lines that can be a memory, a philosophic question, a hallucination, or even an object found on their person or nearby. A pull represents a high stress, dangerous situation and that situation causes something in the PC's head to rattle around and shake loose. Good or bad, something bubbles up from the surface. These are called Memories.

As far as the Memories go, they can be a complete non-sequitur (such as: "You enjoy gardening.") or they can be a hint at what is really going on (like remembering that only a select few were chosen for this mission, though you have no idea what this mission might be). Memories can also reveal knowledge a PC might have about another character on their team and that might be something very nasty. This may cause a switch in the mentality with regard to that character, causing a shift in the group dynamic in a matter of seconds.

The stress that a pull represents might also cause the PC to have a moment of mental breakdown. Hallucinations are common, seeing or hearing people, unremembered until now, walk by you, call you on your communicator, or whisper in your ear only to be gone a moment later. A PC can also remember or notice that they have an object (like a flashlight or a flask) on their person.

Some of the Memories might have special instructions on them such as showing the Memory to another player or showing it to the GM. These instructions should be followed as soon as the Memory is read.

Memories should be read by the players silently and kept to themselves, since most of the time it is something that is taking place in their heads alone. Since a memory is given out as a pull there is usually some sort of high stress situation going on in the game at the moment. It's preferable for the player to read their Memory after the situation is resolved so as not to interrupt the flow of the game. It's also a good time for the GM to switch the focus of the game to another PC or group of PCs to give the person with the new Memories a chance to read and process them. If that's not possible then the game should be paused for a moment or two since the Memoires have the potential to change and further define a PC.

The Memories expand and define the PCs throughout the course of the game with the potential to make them very different people by the end. Sometimes the GM will have players who, either by their play-style, or the situations of the game simply do not make a whole lot of pulls and thus do not have a whole lot of Memories. The GM should figure out if they haven't been giving them a whole lot of spotlight in the game and make some adjustments, have them get attacked or have them walk into a trap, just so they can get a few Memories. Some

people are just not very good at *Jenga* and are more afraid of the tower than they are of what is going on in the game. A GM shouldn't pressure people into making pulls and always allow them to back out of pulling.

There are 54 blocks in a standard *Jenga* tower and if every block is moved that can be moved there are 98 possible total pulls. Since the tower can potently fall and be rebuilt 6 times (one fall granting The Truth plus five tower falls killing off the entire party one at a time + 1 for the 99th and fatal pull from each of those towers) that is a potential of 594 Memories that would need to be handed out in an standard game. In reality, the average GM comes to the table with about 55 Memoires and usually hands out about 20 of them. If a GM needs more than that then they are likely playing with the top 5 world *Jenga* champions.

THE TRUTH

The game of *Silent Memories* is pretty basic. Several people wake up with no memories on a spaceship. That spaceship is about to explode and they need to get from the front of the ship to the back where the damaged engines are. From there they can fix or shut down engines and avert a disaster.

There is a situation going on with the ship that the players are unaware of beyond its impending destruction. This situation can be comprised of several story elements that, while the players might never investigate or even come to learn them, make up the internal consistency of the story called The Truth. The first player who knocks over the tower will get a document detailing most, but not necessarily all, of The Truth and what their part in it is.

The GM must figure out a few things before game time. These story points will play into what is written into The Truth as well as Memories that can hint at what is really going on. It is helpful to answer a few questions to pin down these points. What follows are some sample questions and example answers. A blank worksheet is provided in the documents section. Don't feel tied to these questions and answers; the important thing is to be internally consistent.

What is the mission of the ship?

A terrible war has ravaged the planet Earth. Whole populations were wiped out in fighting that lasted many years. As the great war spiraled out of control the mutually assured destruction of a full scale nuclear exchange between the great superpowers came closer to a reality rather than a threat used by politicians and diplomats. What started as the unattainable pipe dream of a handful of billionaires was picked up and made possible the world's remaining scientists and neutral countries. They built a starship large enough to house enough people to repopulate the human race and fly that ship to a distant habitable planet. With the destruction of the human race about to take place at the hands of war mad world leaders, these people made this pipe dream a reality.

The crew consists of five people woken every 100 years for two weeks to make sure the ship is functioning and on course. None of the shifts have been woken since the journey began due to the sabotage done by the traitor. The same damage that kept everyone asleep has now woken the crew.

Why hasn't the ship been able to fulfill its mission?

The person who receives The Truth turns out to be a traitor. The following is their write up:

The billionaires who financed this ship... this ship name 'Hope', made their money from the weapons that the scientists who designed the ship created. These neutral countries only allow their best and brightest to populate the ship. They were not so neutral when their tanks and fighters rolled over the borders of your nation to rob it of its resources to build their great ship with the blood and sweat of your people. They are not saving humanity, they are saving themselves. You lied, cheated, bribed and outright killed people to secure your spot on the ship. You did so to strike at the bastards who crushed the lives of your people, who enslaved your

family and killed them with the labor of creating this ship. This ship, whose computer you sabotaged, will be the end of you and everything you hate.

What is the current state of the ship?

The ship has continued on auto pilot to its destination and has made a safe landing on a habitable alien world. Unfortunately, the sabotage done to the ship has prevented the human cargo from being woken up from their cryogenic pods trapping them on board.

The ship is in a state of advance age and disrepair as it has been sitting, relatively untouched for hundreds of years after it landed. Critical systems from the computers to the engines are starting to fail. Life support is failing as well causing wild functions in the lights and temperatures. While the planet the ship is on has air to breathe the ship itself is completely sealed. There are no external ports or windows and the external cameras are down. Everyone on board has no idea that they have landed.

What are the dangers current on the ship?

Strange beings inhabit the ship. Tall and gaunt and vaguely human with powerful, sinewy limbs. They are 7 feet tall and have disproportionately long arms and fingers. Their skin is gray in color and is stretched too tightly around their thin frames. Between their strength and speed one of them has the ability to rip apart an unarmed human with ease. They cover their bodies in totems and trinkets they scavenge from the ship and bits of humans they have eaten. Their main food source is people and when none are present they go into a sort of hibernation, waking when prey comes to near. They were once humans that slept in the cryogenic pods; the chemicals that kept them alive had been thrown out of balance by the sabotage done to the computer altering them over time until they are expelled by the system.

The computer sabotage is also affecting the cryogenic systems and causing them to randomly release people. Most of them wound up being eaten by the mutants above but a few do survive. Their skill sets can vary from science to farming to construction or really anything that would be useful to the mission. Unfortunately, a lack of food and constantly being hunted by the mutants and other humans has left most of these people mentally broken or twisted, untrusting of others and dangerous. If questioned they would only be able to give hints at what is going on if they even speak the language of the PCs.

The ship itself is a danger. Normally safe machinery now has the potential to kill their operators. Gantries can give way and doors can close and lock trapping people behind them. Air can be too low in a section to proceed without assistance or even to high creating an explosive atmosphere.

What are some notable areas of the ship?

This section could end up being fairly long, and in fact a GM could end up mapping their whole game out with just this one section. For brevity only two areas will be included here.

MEDICAL BAY
The section is fairly large and consists of several interconnected rooms. There is a lab, a few examination rooms, a row of beds with curtain separators, and a pharmacy. The Medical Officer can refill their supplies here as well as take on some more advanced medical equipment and drugs. Any injured people could be patched up pretty well here too.

The lab section would allow for the Medical Officer to analyze the mutants and find out some information about them. He would need the help to get the computer systems online and they are in shaky shape at best.

The Medical Bay is a good spot for the team to rest a bit and get back into fighting shape if things are getting too tense and hectic. If they end up resting here too long the Medical Bay is a very open area that isn't defensible.

ARMORY
This secure location contains weapons used to defend the ship. All of the arms here are nonlethal stunning devices that project a blast of energy in front of the operator, knocking out standard sized humans. The Medical Officer can revive them with stimulants. If a mutant gets hit with one it would only daze them for a moment and make them stumble. The device takes a moment between firings to recharge. The Engineer or the Technician could rig one up to make a small explosive device.

The room itself is very secure and defensible. Getting into it would require the Engineer to open the heavy bulkhead door on the outside and the Technician to open the electronic security door on the inside. This would be a good place to have an encounter with one of the human crew members using it as a secure hiding place. Gone half mad with fear, thirst, and hunger, they would attack the team with one of the weapons and try to get away.

Who might the team run into?

As with the above question this one could be fairly long and you might end up mapping out most of your game. Only two examples are given here for brevity.

JENNA MILES
A farmer who is chosen to help rebuild humanity on the new colony. The cryogenic systems expelled her from her pod three weeks ago. There were no mutants nearby to attack and eat her. She was able to lay low and survive, consuming nutrients from the feed lines dripping into other pods, thereby killing their occupants although she doesn't know they are dying. The deprivation and fear of the mutants has broken her mind. Malnourished, injured,

and stinking she knows how to get around and avoid the mutants and could help the team. She is also unbalanced and it would take some doing to get through to her. She would attack the first person she sees.

IGNAT YOUNG
A geologist who was expelled from his cryo pod a year and a half ago. There was a mutant nearby when he was released that attacked him. After an intense fight with the creature he was able to wound it and escape. He is extremely paranoid and believes that particular mutant is still alive and hunting him. His damaged psyche has driven him lay traps for the mutants and the rare human. If he catches one he will subject them to an insane line of questioning as to whether they are working for his former attacker. He will also consume mutant and human alike to survive. He will even pretend to help humans for a time to try and lead them into one of his many traps.

THE FLOW OF THE STORY

The basic flow of the story follows the following format:

Awakening – The PCs are awoken

- The Commander wakes up first, this allows the GM to describe the scene in great detail, focusing on what a single person is going through while setting the mood for the game with little input or interruption. This also gives the commander an opportunity to potentially explore the room they are in and having him awaken the rest of the crew. This tends to put him in a position of authority from the outset of the game.

Setup – Getting everyone ready

- After the players emerge from the pods, they can get dressed in the uniforms in the lockers nearby. This is where they will find the equipment for their duties as well as see the rank insignia on their uniforms.

- Lock them in this room. The lock will require the Engineer or the Technician to open it. This will help ensure the Commander won't just run off and get himself killed or eat up time exploring the ship while the other players can't do anything.

- The room is also a place where they can get an idea of situation they are in. The room is in a state of disrepair and some of the systems are not working. The lights go out for the first time, plunging them into darkness. The engines make the whole ship shudder and the automated warning system lets the players know how much time they have until they are all vaporized. The door isn't working, requiring the Engineer or the Technician to make the first pulls of the game

Discovery - Something is very wrong

- The whole ship rumbles, the lights go out, the ship's intercom gives the players the first warning that the ships engines are about to blow up. This gives the group an objective that they can start working on together and sets the pace for the game.

Journey - Front to back

- From the cryo room the team has access to the rest of the ship. As they make their way to engineering they will encounter the various people, obstacles, rooms, corridors, dangers. They will be faced with decisions to take shorter routes into potentially more dangerous areas or spend time working past them with longer and more time consuming routes. The GM has to balance these encounters to keep the team on edge and the tension up without crushing them.

Engineering - The final danger

- At this point in the game the tower should be very shaky and tensions will be running high. A traitor may or may not be working against the team and this will be their last chance to stop them. Can the team make it before time runs out?

The End

- Regardless of the team's success or failure the Truth is revealed and the aftermath is laid out for them.

PULLING METHODS

There are a variety of different ways the GM should have the players make pulls. The standard pulls are as follows:

- **1 Block:** Basic task/Somewhat dangerous situation

- **2 Blocks:** Moderately difficult task/Dangerous situation

- **3 Blocks:** Extremely difficult task/A clear and present danger

The majority of the pulls should 1 and 2 blocks with 3 pulls coming out when the GM really needs to increase the tension around an action.

Sometimes the situation calls for something more dramatic than just adding an extra block to a pull and usually having a person pull a 4th block is just asking them to knock the whole thing over. Here are some examples of optional pull methods that can be used in those situations.

Timed Pulls

Sometimes a situation calls for more pressure than a normal hard (3 blocks) pull will give. If used sparingly a timed pull where the GM tells the player that they have ten seconds to pull a number of blocks puts a lot add tension on them. A timed pull is good for the final pulls of the game such as when the team is fixing the engines. The GM should tell the player that this will be a timed pull before they start to give them a chance to back out.

Players making it harder

There are times when players want to do something that will oppose what another player is doing in a direct way. This is usually The Traitor taking some sort of action that is going to harm the team. If this occurs add an extra pull for the player. This should be used sparingly and it helps to let the PC know that what they are doing seems harder than should but they don't know exactly why. Make sure the player knows exactly how many pulls they are going to get so they have an opportunity to back out.

Bidding Pulls

Sometimes two PCs will want to face off against each other, usually someone wanting to take out The Traitor (or vice versa). If a player wants to directly attack another player the GM can start the bidding at 1 block. If player A says they can pull one block then player B can say they will pull 2. The other player can bid that they will pull 3 and the other can bid or pass. And it goes on until one player passes. The winning player must then pull the number of blocks they said they would pull. If they do so they win but if they drop the tower their PC dies and the person they are bidding against wins.

TRUST

Trust is an important part of this system since there is no objective rules system for determining the outcomes of actions. Just because the player makes a successfully pull doesn't mean what they want to happen will. It just means that they are generally successful. If the players were 100% successful at what they are trying to do then they would be unstoppable supermen smashing their way to their goals until fate chooses one of them to die. Then the rest would pick up and smash their way to the end of the game. *Silent Memories* is a game about tension and fear. The players should get hurt along the way, they should be running on adrenaline, they should be dirty, and they should be exhausted.

The tower is the GM's gauge how hard things should be for the team. As the tower fills with holes and starts to tilt and sway with pulls so do the things the team is trying to do not work out exactly the way they hoped they would. On the other hand it's not the GM's job to hand the team a string of defeats but instead to give them hard fought wins or victories with a price.

As the team is expected to trust the GM to not defeat them at every turn, that expectation goes both ways. The GM needs to trust the players. When the players say they want to do things the GM should never tell them no unless it doesn't fit within the scope of the game (such as a player suddenly wanting to start casting fireballs from their hands, perhaps they went insane?). The GM should tell the player yes they can do that or say yes they can do that but this is what will happen if try.

RUNNING THE GAME

The key to running *Silent Memories* is to let the players have free reign to explore, make plans, discover hidden things, and to let them run with their ideas. If they want to do something that would throw your game off balance, say going to an airlock and leaving the ship, don't stop them. If the GM can change and adapt the situation while still remaining within the framework they have made, then that allows the players to make the bold and dangerous choices that makes all of the tension and fear worth it. The GM's job is not to limit the players but to the throw challenges at them while steadily turning up the tension. What follows in this section is advice on specific aspects of the game the GM might find useful.

TRAITOR VS. NON TRAITOR

One of the key mechanics of *Silent Memories* is the revelation of The Truth to the first person who drops the tower is someone who turns out to be the villain of the story. The Truth can be written in such a way to make the PC who gets it the one who caused the disaster aboard the ship or their goals run counter to the goals and even safety of the team. *Silent Memories* was written with this scenario in mind but it doesn't have to have a traitor to work.

The GM could have The Truth reveal just that, The Truth, and not anything about the PC who dropped the tower or what is revealed isn't something that would drive them to try harm the rest of the team. Perhaps they did cause the disaster and feel a great amount of shame and guilt. The addition of the traitor is only one way to add a dramatic element to the story.

Traitors should be given a stack of blank note cards so that they can pass nefarious messages to the GM about what they are doing. When Traitors make pulls they no longer get Memories as they have full

access to their past now. GMs should also consider making them do less than the normal amount of pulls, giving them passes on normal actions unless they are putting their lives in danger or putting the lives of the team in danger. This prevents them from making the tower unstable and puts the focus of the game on the team.

SETTING THE PACE

Silent Memories is designed to be a one shot game (but if you want to make it longer, by all means, please do!) and that opens up an opportunity for the GM to put an additional layer of pressure on the team. If you plan on running a three hour game then have the engines blow up in three hours, real time. Have a clock running and let the players know as soon as possible after they all get out of the pods that when this clock runs out of time all of the PCs die and the game is over. The only way for them to stop it is to fix the engines. This sets the pace for the whole rest of the game and motivates the team to take action.

While this adds tension right from the start the GM has to be aware that something that is a dramatic delay doesn't quite work with the timer. For instance if the PCs have a choice to make in a section of the ship, take the longer but safer way or the shorter more dangerous way. If they take the longer way the GM can't take 15 or 20 minutes of describing crawling through maintenance tubes while nothing happens. No matter what way the team chooses something needs to happen and whatever happens time gets eaten up. The difference in the two choices should be how the GM presents the tension. The longer, safer way could involve a low tension encounter with damaged section of the ship where the team must plan out how they are going to traverse it. The shorter, more dangerous way could involve a higher tension encounter where the team must cross a room filled with sleeping mutants. Either way, precious time is eaten off the clock but the difference is the level of tension.

SPLITTING THE TEAM

Usually splitting up the team is considered a bad idea in most games but it does seem to work with *Silent Memories*. Teams tend to get spooked early on and stick to each other like glue but if the tension rises slowly enough at first the team tends to split off to cover more ground. The introduction of the bridge goes a long way to helping a split up team. From the bridge cameras can be operated and monitored and ship schematics can be looked up. Doors can be remotely opened and warnings of danger ahead of the team can be given as well. This doesn't mean that the bridge is a safe place to be, far from it. The bulk of the team usually venture out into the ship leaving behind only one or two people in a room where any number of things can happen. As long as the groups have a way of communicated with each other either via a ship's intercom system (a great system to have cut in and out at all the wrong moments) or personal radio gear and the GM is comfortable with dividing the action splitting up the team is quite workable.

HANDLING EACH JOB

The job that tends to get the most pulls seems to be the Engineer. The team will run into a lot of issues on a broken down ship that require getting a bulkhead door open or a machine running. As such the Engineer tends to see a lot of Memories and, if you are playing a traitor game, would have a higher chance of being the traitor. Big bulkhead doors can prove to be a good obstacle for the team's progress and an opportunity to get the Engineer to get some pulls.

The Generalist would tend to have the least amount of pulls since they are only there to assist the other jobs in doing things that are not their normal functions (Commanders tend to lead from the front and get in danger a lot, giving them a good share of pulls). The Generalist is the most important position for the team. On one hand they are free to carry out a lot of the plans, stand watch, scout around, or really anything while the other members are carrying out their functions.

Also, if the Engineer gets killed or turns traitor then the Generalist is the only one who can assist the team in fixing the engines. If him and the Engineer are out the best the team can hope for is to shut everything down and depending on what is going on (The Truth) that might not solve anything long term.

The Technician is very useful in pulling fragments of data out of the computers and interpreting it to give the team a better understanding of what is going on. They can turn on security cameras, pull up ship schematics, get internal communications running, and open electronically sealed interior doors.

The team should feel some pain as the tension mounts and the Medical Officer's job is to keep them going when that pain turns to injury. They also carry a variety of chemicals to keep people awake and going or put them to sleep; they even know how to mix those drugs to kill in a variety of ways. The Medical Officer is also a scientist knowledgeable in a variety of fields. They can interpret data given to them by the Technician or the Engineer and they can put the labs in the med bays to good use if the team wants some answers on the mutants/aliens/killer robots may be infesting the ship.

The Commander leads. It is as simple as that. No one has to follow him but it is expected, at least at first. People who play the Commander usually end up leading from the front and thus putting themselves in harm's way more than anyone else on the team.

SECTIONAL ADVENTURE DESIGN

Designing and drawing out a map of the entire ship is one way of running the adventure. It keeps things organized and you can show the players a version of the map without any notes on it. This will allow players to map out their routes and make plans.

Another way of approaching the game is to design a collection of rooms and sections of the ship and attach their corresponding events to them but not actually put them down in order or on a map. When the player say they want to go to a specific room, such as the medical bay, they don't necessarily needs to know the exact way down.

Turn left at this corridor, right at the fire extinguisher, third door on the right. They just want to know that they are headed in the right direction and are making progress. This allows the GM to pull rooms or sections or situations out of his catalog based not on if the players went to that exact spot on the map but, instead, based on if the game needs more or less tension. If the players have been in explore mode for a bit the GM can then pull out any of his more intense situations to have the players walk into. The important part is to keep it consistent. If the players want to return to that place at a later time they don't need to know exact direction but they would feel cheated if they walked ten feet out of a room and was then told it was on the far side of the ship when they said they were popping back in to pick up their dropped wallet.

ENGINEERING A TOWER DROP

When running a game where The Truth will reveal one of the PCs as a traitor the GM might want to consider engineering the amount of pulls the team is doing so that the tower will fall when the GM wants it to. Usually the midpoint of the game is a good time to do this. That way the traitor has enough time to set some plans in motion and the team has enough time to get really paranoid, worried, and tries to out the bad guy.

The wrong way of doing this would be to have the team start making crazy pulls for stupid things (such as "Pull three to light that cigarette!" or "Pull four to tie your shoes!") in the first few moments of the game. The GM should make a slow but steady ramp up in the amount of pulls to the midpoint of the game. This will make for a great building of tension, release, then the players can take a break to calm down a bit before the second act. In the second act the GM should not engineer a tower drop as it will kill a PC. Let the tension build up to a grand finale.

It is not necessary to engineer a tower drop regardless of there being a traitor or not. A well run and well-played game should have enough drama and tension on its own. Also, some people might consider it unfair to engineer a drop.

YOUR IDEAS, YOUR STORY

Like with any RPG don't feel constrained but what has been written here. The game can work with just about anything written into The Truth. Has the ship really landed? Is it part of some larger fleet? Is this all just a horrible alien experiment? The jobs as well can be anything you need them to be as well. Want to run a light hearted version? The crew that wakes up is the cleaning and maintenance crew because there is a clogged toilet in section five. Something more action packed? The ship has detected intruders and has awakened the Security team. Something scary? The ship is actually an alien space station and the PCs who got woken up are part of a bizarre experiment. A more brutal story? This is a prison transport ship, something wakes a handful of passengers up but they don't remember who is a prisoner and who is a guard.

The game can be played in many different ways, don't be limited by the examples and jobs listed in these rules. The basics of *Silent Memories* works with any game involving tension and amnesia plots, not just ones in the future on space ships.

If you are looking for ideas www.morningskye.com will have plots, Truths, and Memories available in addtion to the scenario used in the examples.

◼ TRUTH WORKSHEET ◼

What is the mission of the ship?

Why hasn't the ship been able to fulfill its mission?

What is the current state of the ship?

What are the dangers current on the ship?

What are some notable areas of the ship?

Who might the team run into?

◼ EXAMPLE MEMORIES ◼

The following list of Memories is designed to work with the examples of The Truth that are found in this book.

The Ship's name is Hope.

You were a war veteran and saw many people die.

You have not seen your parents in a long, long time.

You caught the Commander cheating
at Poker before the mission.

If you are the Commander you were cheating at
Poker and were caught by the Technician.

You were in a fistfight with the Medical Officer
over a woman.

Hand this to the Medic, you both remember
this together. If you are the Medic hand it to
another player of your choosing.

You have a younger sister who is dead.
You don't remember her name or how she died.

You have a pet dog who you love very much.

Your mother is not on board the ship.

You enjoy Chess and are quite good at it.

You seem to remember that the Engineer doesn't
know as much as he should about his job.

If you are the Engineer then you doubt some of your
knowledge about the ship but are trying to hide it.

You once shot someone and did not regret it.

Pick one other person. The two of you got drunk in
a bar the night before the mission. That person was
making jokes about blowing up the ship.

You have only been in love with one person.

It was raining on launch day.

You wear your father's watch.

You put your hand in your pocket and feel the
grip of a pistol. It is a two shot derringer.
No one knows you have it.

Show this to the GM when you receive it.

Going through your pockets you find a security
door badge. This will lock or unlock any door once
before the ships computer shuts it off.

Show this to the GM when you receive it.

You find a picture of two men and one woman
standing around you in what looks like a park.
You do not remember who these people are.

You find a picture of a dog on your person.
You suspect it is yours, but you are not sure.

As you are walking along your foot taps into something.
You quickly pick it up finding that it is a flashlight.
No one noticed that you picked it up.

Show this to the GM when you receive it.

You remember seeing a file on the Specialist saying
that they might have received payments from an enemy
government during the war but there was no proof.

If you are the Specialist hand this to any other player,
you catch them giving you a strange look.

You and the Commander have the same tattoo.

Make up what the tattoo is and why you have it;
feel free to share this memory with the Commander
if you get a chance.

The Engineer met you a long time ago at college.
You remember it as a very different time than when
you met him again on the mission.

If you are the Engineer pass this to any other player,
you both remember the meeting.

Your favorite musical piece is Suit No. 4 In D Minor
by Georg Handel.

Your birthday is July 12th 2238.

Your birthday is August 27th 2230.

Your name is James, not Jim if male,
and Jennifer not Jen if female.

The Medical Officer's nickname is Brick after he
made national news getting hit in the head with a
brick during a protest they were not involved in.

You had a twin.

The Specialist is related to you in some way,
but you do not remember how.

During the training tests for the mission you
believe that the Medical Officer was cheating.
You reported this but nothing came of it.

If you are the Medic then you remember that the
Engineer reported you for cheating. You do not
remember if you were or not.

The Technician became involved in a relationship with a close friend of
yours during training. During this time the relationship became very
abusive. Your friend begged you not to report it as they thought the
mission was to import to jeopardize the Tech position on it.
Your silence ensured his position.

If you are the Tech pass this paper to the Engineer,
you both now know.

Something about the Commander gets under your skin.
You don't like this person and the reason is right on the edge
of your memory but you just cannot shake it loose.

If you are the Commander replace 'Commander' in the
memory above with 'Specialist'.

Every memory that is coming to you about X is them showing you
up somehow or cutting you down to make themselves look better.
Jokes at your expense during a staff meeting or overhearing
them make fun of you behind your back.

Show this memory to the GM
and they will point out who X is.

This is the first time you have been off planet.
You remember this as being odd and not normal
for most people.

You have an overwhelming fear of small places.

Is she on board the ship?

How long has it been?

What did the Medical Officer do to you that
makes you not trust them?

Why did you leave them all behind?

Why do you feel so guilty?

Did they all have to die? All of them?

You see your sister at quickly walking out of the room.

You see a dead body, it looks exactly like your brother,
but if you inspect it you find that it is not.

The next computer terminal you find you see an email from your
parents waiting to be opened. When you try to open it there is no email.

There is no one to water your plants back home.
This is a sad memory for you.

You gave away everything before you left on the mission.

During training the Medical Officer made your
dislocated shoulder worse nearly knocking you out
of the running for a spot in the mission.

If you are the Medic you botched fixing the Technician's
shoulder and almost got him removed from the mission.

Your communicator goes off, if you answer you hear your childhood
friend asking you something but you cannot make out what he is saying.

Apology is for the weak;
at least that is what Dad always said.

In your pocket is a flask, ½ full with brandy, it has an emblem engraved
on it. You define what the emblem is but your character does not
remember what it represents.