

*Because I love you*  
a role-playing game about murder

by Jonathan Semple

*I'm sorry. I didn't know what else to do.*

*Because I love you* is a role-playing game where everyone loves everybody else, and everyone wants to murder everybody else. It doesn't have to be you doing the killing, of course. As long as people end up dead.

*I love you because you're perfect.*

*I want to murder you because you're perfect.*

To play you'll need some six-sided dice (d6), a standard deck of playing cards (with jokers in), index cards (or another form of paper to write on) and something to write with (preferably erasable).

If you have fewer than five players (it's fine to have more), remove suits from the deck of playing cards so that there are one fewer card suits than there are players. So, for example, if there are only four players, play with only three suits of cards.

Split the playing cards into two separate decks, one with just the face cards (Kings, Queens, Jacks) and one with all the other cards. Shuffle the decks.

All players should, possibly through collaboration, give their actions a bit of narration. The goal is to tell a story.

### **Character Creation**

*My mother taught me how to love everything, and my father taught me to hate it all.*

Draw a card from the deck of face cards. This is your character card. Once everyone has a character card, set the remaining face cards aside, you won't need them anymore (keep your character card).

*An old man who still thinks he can save the world.*

On an index card, write down your character's name and a brief description. This is your character sheet. You may want to collaborate with the other players on this. For role-playing purposes, if your character card has the same suit as someone else's, then it indicates that your characters probably have a closer relationship than otherwise (maybe family, or lovers, or whatever you and the other players think is appropriate).

*I am the suicide king.*

On your character sheet, record your injuries and your emotion. These both start at 0.

*I love you because you're everything I ever wanted to be.*

*I want to murder you because you're too much like our father.*

For each other character in the game, write down on your character sheet why you love them, and why you want to murder them. Again, you might want to collaborate with the other players for this.

*I love you because you keep me sane.*

*I want to murder you because you're getting in the way of my self-destruction.*

### **Locations**

*The playground where we spent our childhood. Only rust remains.*

Take one index card for each card suit in use (so with five or more people, four locations). On each location, write down its associated card suit (each location should have a different suit).

*Home. No one lives here anymore.*

Collaboratively come up with a name or short description for each location and write it down. Locations should have some sort of significance for most, if not all, characters. If someone's character card has the same suit as the location, then that location should have some sort of extra significance for them.

*The city. So many people, and none of them cares.*

On each location write down each character's name, with an associated modifier. All modifiers start at +0.

### **Playing the game**

*I love you because I hated my family.*

*I want to murder you because blood is blood.*

The game is divided into rounds. Each round of play has two phases.

First the Manipulation Phase, then the Murder Phase.

Continue playing rounds until the game ends.

### **End of the game**

*Congratulations. You have destroyed everything you love.*

The game ends when there are one or fewer people left alive.

### **Manipulation Phase**

*You'll find me in the graveyard. Only one of us will leave.*

During the manipulation phase every player gets one action. If there are any dead players, then only dead players get an action.

Any player may use their action (if they have one) to manipulate a location. Choose a location, and choose a modifier on it. Roll one d6. If the roll is greater than the absolute value of the target modifier, you may increase or decrease it by one.

There is no particular order in which players must act during the manipulation phase. The manipulation phase ends when there are no players who want to act, or no players who can act.

### **Murder Phase**

*It's killing time.*

Everyone draws a card from the deck of non-face cards. This is your movement card.

Each player has one action. Again, there is no particular order in which players must act.

If another player has a movement card that has the same suit as your character card, you use your action to take their movement card and give them yours. For the purposes of taking, Jokers have no suit, so you cannot take them.

If you have a movement card that has the same suit as your character card, you may use your action to give your movement card to another player and take their movement card. For the purposes of giving, Jokers have every suit.

You may not give a movement card back to the player that gave it to you, and you may not take a movement card back from the player that took it from you.

Living players may not give cards to dead players, or take cards from dead players. Dead players may give and take cards as normal (even giving to or taking from other dead players).

Once there are no players who want to act, or no players who can act, every living player moves their character to the location of the same suit as their movement card. If your movement card is a Joker, choose any one of the locations and move to it.

The value on the movement card when you move is your movement value (Aces have value one, Jokers have value zero). If you are moving to the location of the same suit as your character card, you instead have movement value equal to your character card's value (Kings are thirteen, Queens are twelve and Jacks are eleven).

*I don't really hate you.*

If there are two people in the same location, they fight.

If there are more than two people in the same location, the two people with the highest movement value fight.

### **Fighting**

*I love you.*

Roll one d6 (possibly modified due to injury, see below). The result is your defence. Add your character's modifier for the location you are fighting in. The result is your attack.

*I'll still love you even when you're dead.*

If your attack is greater than your opponent's defence, they gain one injury.

If at least one person is injured in a fight, both people fighting gain one emotion.

### **Clashing**

*I love you too.*

If two people are fighting and their attacks are equal, they clash (whether or not their attacks actually injured anyone).

When two people clash, they immediately fight again.

### **Catharsis**

*Why do I have to feel this way? Why couldn't you make me stop loving you?*

After a fight, add your emotion to your attack. If the result is more than double your opponent's defence, you enter a cathartic release. If both people in a fight enter a cathartic release, the one with more emotion goes through their release first.

Attack again. Fight, with you re-rolling your attack and defence, and your opponent's attack and defence remaining the same. Your opponent does not injure you during a cathartic release.

You and your opponent may clash during a cathartic release. You clash immediately, then continue with your cathartic release (using your opponent's new attack and defence).

No one gains emotion during a cathartic release.

For each attack in a cathartic release, subtract one from your emotion. Continue attacking until you have zero emotion, or your opponent is dead (whichever comes first).

## **Injuries**

*There's so much blood. So much blood.*

If you have five or more injuries, you are heavily injured and suffer a -1 to all combat rolls you make.

If you have 8 or more injuries, you are instead critically injured and suffer a -2 to all combat rolls you make.

Otherwise you are only lightly injured (or uninjured if have zero injuries).

You die when you have 10 injuries.