

**For 1+ Players**

**Ages 0 - Death**

**OBJECT**

Meet expectations, never fail, know what the right thing to do is in every situation, let no one down, and have no regrets at the end of the game.

**CONTENTS**

* Game board
* Spinner ring, spinner dial and spinner arm
* Family
* Life
* Death
* An out of place dress
* Funeral Home
* Choices
* Expectations
* A summer house
* A job
* Friends
* Failure
* Tears
* Excuses
* Guilt
* Regret
* Pain

First, play a simple board game called Life with your younger brother during childhood. Take advantage of every chance you have to play the game during the summer before your sixth grade year. Sit down on the floor across from one another, pull off the top of that white rectangular box, pass out the paper money and other game pieces, and hurry to put all of the houses and bridges on the game board.

Commence playing the game as explicitly written in the instruction manual: just spin the rainbow-colored wheel, go the number of spaces that you land on, choose a career, get married, buy a house, have some kids along the way, acquire a few life pieces if you land on the right spaces, and before you know it, someone has moved their van through the entire board and won. It is usually you.

Think that your life will be as simple as this game and that you will have no troubles in life, and live a very simple life up until the age of 17. Do not experience the loss of a loved one except for your pet cat. The cat was one of your best friends, but that loss will never compare to the loss of a family member. Do well in school and hardly ever disappoint your friends or family. It’s hard not to think that you will excel in everything when your report card shows all A’s each term. Failure does not seem to be possible. Gain a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong, and make choices according to this moral compass. As of now, it has never led you astray. Assume that you will always know the right thing to do. Do not expect the difficult choices that you will have to make. Do not prepare for any misfortune.

**Draw a Decision Card:** Sit in a chair in the Funeral Home, look forward at the casket, and then back down again at your watch. Feel very uncomfortable and have the urge to flee. All of the crying, the smell of flowers over that of musty funeral home, and the sad look on every one of your elders’ eyes is too much to take all at once. They all look lost, and these are the people you look to for guidance. Before the priest goes up to speak, notice that your grandma and great-aunt are scanning the room for someone to remedy the situation to some extent. Sit and stare back down at your lap, and pray that their eyes will not fall upon you. Then, your grandma approaches you and asks if you could say a few words about your great grandma. Everyone is looking at you. Panic. You will choose the card that reads: “I don’t know. I wouldn’t know what to say. I’m sorry. I just… I just don’t know what I would say.”

All players spin the wheel. Highest spinner takes the first turn. Play then continues clockwise.

**What You Do on a Turn**

On your turn, spin the wheel that decides your fate. Guess which direction is best to go in without knowing the consequences of your choice. You will have no clue what you’re doing and no way to prepare for what might fall upon the path that you decide to take.

Always move your car forward. (Just as in real life, you can’t go back in time!) And if you try to go back in time, you will quickly realize that this is against the rules.

There are not many explicit directions. Just try to make it through the course in the number of spaces you spun. This ends your turn. *Your first turn is an exception. See GETTING STARTED.*

**Getting Started**

On your first turn, you will land on a DEATH CHOICE space. Your Great Grandmother has died after a 54-day struggle in the hospital after a heart attack, and you must now attend her funeral. You have never attended a funeral before. The word funeral is no more than an abstraction to you. You have no idea what this day will require of you.

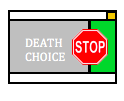
**START MOURNING**

If you decide to start the mourning process, place yourself on the PICK A DRESS space, then do the following:

**G A M E P L A Y**

**DEATH CHOICE**

When you reach the DEATH CHOICE space, stop – even if you have moves left. Then do the following:



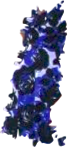
Let everyone down by not meeting the expectations of others. Acquire guilt as your dad whispers in your ear: “You should have said something.” The lump in your throat will grow. Then, watch droplets fall from your eyes and stain the lap of your out of place dress. Mourn your own shortcomings. See the DEATH GUIDANCE section, below.

DEATH defines LIFE. You cannot expect it, but everyone will meet it in time. When it comes to DEATH, the right choice will never be clear until later on, because expectations in situations regarding death are usually implicit. You can try to make excuses for why you failed to be there for someone, but it’s hard not to think that you are just selfish and wanted to avoid the hassle or an uncomfortable situation.

You will regret it when you make the wrong choices, but you cannot change the past. All that you can do is hope for the forgiveness of those that you let down. It was just a misunderstanding after all. However, looking at your choices like this will only make you feel stupid.

**DEATH GUIDANCE**

**Draw a Dress Card:** Wake up the morning of the funeral and put on the only black dress in your closet. It’s not even completely black. It has a purple and gray floral design on it. Hope it will be acceptable. Your mom says it is fine, but you don’t know if she’s just saying that. The one rule you know to follow is to wear a black dress, and you can’t even do that.



2

**THE SPACES**

**Space Colors**

As you move yourself through LIFE and DEATH, notice the space colors—they’re important! Here’s what the colors mean:

**Light Grey**

**Spaces**

Most spaces are light grey. Whenever you land on a light grey space, you *must* make a difficult decision. There will be many hard choices to make in your life.

**Blue Spaces**

These spaces indicate emotional states that you will experience. Choose to experience emotions from sadness, to guilt, to regret.

**Green Spaces**

These are PAY DAY spaces. Whenever you land on or pass a PAY DAY space, you must pay for the bad choices that you made in LIFE when dealing with DEATH. You will have regrets, but you can’t go back now. You just have to pay.

**Grey Spaces**

These spaces are called DEATH CHOICE, and there are multiple that may fall in your path. Whenever you reach a grey space, stop – even if you have moves left. There will be no directions on how to proceed, and you will have many difficult choices to make.

**GET A JOB**

About a year after your great-grandma’s funeral, life will return to its simple self. Spend the summer living at your family’s summer home on the west side of Michigan and get a job working at the beach store in Pentwater. Become close with the boss’s daughter Melissa. Before you know it, you will think she is your best friend.

Receive invites from her to go out at night, and begin to feel less lonely as you meet more and more new people. One of those people will be a guy named Mitch. He actually works down at the state park too as a park ranger, so you are sure to have many more encounters with him.

As summer ends, develop the biggest crush on that guy Mitch. There’s something about the way that he always says what is on his mind and makes you laugh that makes it hard not to fall for him. Know that he would be the type of guy to be there for me if you ever needed him. He will kiss you right before you go off to school, and you will want him to be yours. But you must head off to school. Assume you were insignificant to him and move on with your life.

**DEALING WITH DEATH**

**Fail To Act As Someone Expects When Someone Dies**

Talk to him on occasion during your first two weeks at school, adjust to your new classes, and wonder if that last week of summer meant anything to him. Text him when you’re bored one night and ask him what he is up to. When he doesn’t respond, think nothing of it. Receive a reply later that night that he would tell me the reason for the delayed response when he could. Text each other goodnight but worry that it was not a *good* night for him.

Remember hearing about his mom being sick this past summer. Recall how he referred to her disease cryptically as a “family medical problem.” But know that she has breast cancer. Melissa told you about that. Feel horrible for his family, but don’t realize how sick she really is.

Wake up the next morning to a text from Mitch that just says “Hey.” Respond the same as you board the bus you take to campus. Receive this text: “Sorry my mom passed away last night. That’s why I didn’t text you back.” Stop breathing. Lose touch with reality. The bus seems to fall silent as you begin to panic. What do you say? You have no clue what to say.

**DECISION**

DEATH GUIDANCE

Screen Shot 2012-12-18 at 5.25.02 PM.png

Screen Shot 2012-12-18 at 5.21.11 PM.png

**PAY DAY**

3

Later that day, talk to him on the phone. Listen to his broken, distant voice tell you how he never saw it coming and all of the events leading up to this moment. Decide to say something generic but with sincerity: “If you need anything – I know everyone says this, but I mean it – If you need anything, I’m here for you.”

Read something about the funeral on Facebook. Without thought, the word funeral will conjure up a mixture of uncomfortable feelings that accompanied the first, and only other, funeral I had ever attended – my great-grandmother’s. Debate whether you should go or not to this one. Find many reasons not to go from your lack of car to not having a black dress to wear. Figure that you are just an annoying freshman girl with a crush on him, and resolve not to go thinking your absence will go unnoticed.

**GET A BOYFRIEND**

One year later, find yourself dating Mitch. How did this happen? You’re still not really sure. Take a walk on a winter’s night and notice old feelings of insecurity stirring up inside. Take a deep breath to fill yourself with composure, but as you breathe out, composure will leave your body with what looks like a puff of smoke into the cool air. Within a few strides down the snow-covered streets, your vision will blur further as tears pour down your wind burnt cheeks. Turn around to face him so that you are walking dangerously backward down the icy road. Know that it’s against the rules to go backward, but go anyway. Ramble quickly about how you don’t know if you can trust him. Blame him for not wanting to be with you sooner.

See the pain in his eyes as you talk, and feel your heart start to race and your palms grow sweaty. You know this can’t end well. Lose the upper hand when he says: “You know last year was hard for me. I thought you were over the past.” You thought you were, but maybe you’re not. Be reminded that his mom died last year. He’s always reminding you like you might have forgotten. Wonder if he thinks you are that dense. Then he will say something he has never said before: “You didn’t even come to her funeral.” Feel guilty. You have obviously broken a rule. Start to make excuses for yourself. Feel worse about the situation as the words come out of your mouth. Know you just couldn’t go, but wonder if that’s true.

**PAY DAY: FACE YOUR CHOICES**

Worry that your decision not to attend that funeral was motivated by selfishness. Maybe, you just didn’t want to deal with the hassle of figuring out how to get there, take your mind off your studies, or put yourself in an uncomfortable situation. Reassure yourself that at the time of her death you weren’t that close to him. Know you are stretching the truth to make yourself feel better. Regret not going. You never knew how resentful he would be. He will always remember that you were not there, and you feel awful for that. Perhaps, someday he will forgive your misunderstanding, but by misunderstanding you almost feel worse. You feel stupid. Realize there was no way that you could have prepared for death. No one ever sees it coming.

**HOW TO LOSE**

Never prepare for failure, or death, or failure in the face of death. Do not prepare yourself to make a speech in front of countless relatives who knew your great-grandmother way longer than you did. Decide not to go to your eventual boyfriend’s mom’s funeral, and do not prepare to face the after-math of either of these situations. The guilt resulting from your lack of speech at my great-grandmother’s funeral will be resolved in knowing that no one else had the courage to get up and speak either. Your guilt as a consequence of not going to the other funeral will probably always reside inside of you. If others knew to go, could go, and went, then why didn’t you? Wonder about this often. The lack of transportation, the lack of knowledge, and the lack of experience with death in your life seem to make for valid evidence in regard to why your choice is forgivable. But they do not do anything to make me feel like any better of a person. You still lose!

4