

# Fruit hangs heavy

A game by Matthijs Holter



This role-playing game is made to pick up and play. It doesn't require a game master. You don't need any preparations. All you have to do is gather a group of 3-5 players, including yourself. The game takes about 2-3 hours.

When the group has gathered around a table, give this leaflet to the youngest player. He or she should read *all* the rules out loud. The reading is part of the game. Read calmly, and make sure you understand everything.

Where there's a drawing of leaves you should follow the instructions given before you continue. The leaves look like this:



Imagine that you draw the essence from your own youth. You boil out the juices of the billowing leaves and make an elixir that gives you all of it, refined.

The real teenage years had many false starts. The party you couldn't find. The boy or girl who never became a boyfriend or girlfriend. The time you went out for drinks and all your expectations of magic weren't fulfilled.

Tonight something will be fulfilled. We don't know yet what it is.

We'll fill the game with memories and dreams. Everything we only half remember – or perhaps want to forget until it resurfaces. The powers we have inside us are gathered, woven together and distilled into a life with a power borrowed from the divine.

The events take place in our time, in the country we're in. We won't define more than that. It's not allowed to say years or names of places, or to describe things that define exactly when and where the game takes place.

We'll get the best atmosphere for the game if we engage with it. It's good to accept input and ideas from others, and not try to push the game in a particular direction. The rules of the game will make sure the story finds its own flow.

## The place

There is a beautiful and secret place, a little world that only we know about. Perhaps we're the only ones who can see the beauty in it. A forest clearing; the mound of gravel behind the generator house; the

garage which is the only place John's mom doesn't clean; the hidden beach with the white stones.

The first thing we do in the game is to describe this place together. First we each say a detail from the place, in turn. Then one of us – the youngest – tells us what the place is, what it looks like, what we do there. We start now, with the player to my left.



## The characters

The characters are youths – teenagers. We know that each of them represents a trait of youth. They don't know that themselves. The traits could, for example, be the *wildness* of youth; the *naiveté* of youth; the *self-assuredness* of youth; the *beauty* of youth; the *half-finishedness* of youth.

We'll all make characters. First we will, in turn, decide for the player to our left what trait his or her character represents. The player to my right starts – you get to decide what trait my character represents.



Then we will, in turn, say the names of our characters. The player to my left starts.



Then we will, in turn, give a description of our characters. Don't mention any relationships to the other characters yet; we'll come to that. The player to my right starts.



Finally we will, in turn, say what relationship our character has to one of the other characters. We continue doing this until each character has a relationship to each of the others. Relationships can be asymmetric; if you say your character hates mine, perhaps I'll say that my character loves yours.

Give each other suggestions and comments – but the person who's turn it is decides what relationship he or she wants to describe, and how.

It can be a good idea to write down the names of the characters and what relationships they have to each other. That makes it easier for us to remember it during the game.

The player to my right starts.



Soon the game will begin. It's divided into scenes. In each scene one of us will set the scene, and one or more of us will play our characters. Whoever sets the scene decides who gets to play their characters – but some scenes have special instructions for these and other things.

We're going to shuffle the scene cards and put the stack face down. Put the top three cards on the table, face up.



## The scenes

In the game we'll start our scenes in turn. When it's your turn, you pick up one of the face-up scene cards and use it for inspiration. If there are any scene cards marked "Play immediately", you must choose one of them on your turn.

The descriptions on the cards are only keywords – read them literally or metaphorically, as you like. The scene cards also show how many characters can be present – you decide which ones. It's a good idea to make sure all the characters get their time in the spotlight; if there are any characters that haven't been played for a while, it's good to include them in the scene.

You start the scene with a description, which at least has to include the place the scene starts, and the names of the characters present. If you want to, you can ask some of the other players to describe parts of the scene, for example what their house looks like or where they're working this summer.

The players who have characters in the scene play freely until you finish it. You can contribute to the scene, for example by playing secondary characters and portraying the environment, but you don't have to. You can also play your own character, if it's in the scene.

Remember that even though you decide when the scene ends, it's a good idea to be sensitive to atmospheres and situations. Feel what the scene needs, and give it the time to play out.

When the scene is done, draw a new card and lay it face up, so there are always three open cards.

To sum up: When you start the scene, choose a scene card and decide what characters are in. Describe where the characters are, and how the scene starts. The players involved play until you finish the scene. Then you draw a new card and lay it face up.

In the final scene it can be a good idea to have all the characters present, so we can see how everyone's story ends. When the last scene has been played, the game is over.

The player to my left starts the first scene.



A death in the family.  
1-2  
characters.



The music.  
1 or more  
characters.



Someone else  
finds the place.  
1 or more  
characters.



Where they go  
every day.  
1 or more  
characters.



Psychoactive  
substances.  
1-3 characters.



Love breaks  
down.  
2 characters.



Breaking the  
rules.  
1 or more  
characters.



**PLAY IMMEDIATELY:**  
Who's against  
them?  
1 character.



Strongly  
inebriated  
together.  
2 or more characters.



Talking  
all night.  
2 or more characters.



The limits  
of the body.  
1 or more  
characters.



The seduction.  
2 characters.



**PLAY IMMEDIATELY:**  
Repeating motive.  
Introduce a motive – an  
object, a vibe – that repeats  
during the game.  
1 or more characters.



**PLAY IMMEDIATELY:**  
The creature.  
Choose a mythological  
being that will be present  
symbolically during the  
game.  
1 or more characters.

