

The Harvest Festival

A pastoral game about interpersonal conflict and support networks, by Marshall Bradshaw
2-20 players, 2.5 hours

Mandatory Supplies: 4 sheets of origami paper per player, 1 copy of paper crane origami instructions per 2 players, 2 copies of as many different origami instructions as needed to split the players into groups no bigger than 4 and have each group work on a unique origami model

Letter-sized paper that has been cut to be square can substitute for origami paper.

Free printable origami instructions of a variety of difficulty levels can be found at <https://www.origami-fun.com/>

Recommended Supplies: 1 nametag per player, 1 index card per player, pens/pencils/markers, speaker & instrumental music

Recommended Safety Mechanics: Out-of-character check-in, OK check-in, largo, cut

Character & Setting Creation

- 1) Distribute 1 piece of origami paper to each player and all paper crane instructions
- 2) Ask all players to try folding a paper crane while you perform the next step. This is to practice listening while working and will inform casting.
- 3) Explain the setting and the prompt for character creation:

This game takes place in a rural village full of craftspeople. They are preparing for the annual Harvest Festival, when each craftspeople will present their proudest works to other members of the community as a symbol of gratitude, forgiveness, or apology.

You will play one of these craftspeople. During the day, you will sit with an elder perfecting your craft and seeking advice from your peers about your personal life. At night, you will be free to play out brief scenes with other villagers to put that advice into practice (for better or for worse). After the third day, we will celebrate the Harvest Festival and give away the things we created.

When creating your character, consider those who you wish to give gratitude, forgiveness, or an apology. Consider those who you feel owe you gratitude, forgiveness, or an apology. Consider those to whom you will never give gratitude, forgiveness, or an apology.

- 4) Line up the players by how happy they are with their (perhaps unfinished) paper crane. The happiest will play elders.
- 5) Break into groups no larger than 4, each with an elder and 2 copies of origami instructions unique to their group.
- 6) Instruct the groups to decide what sort of craft their origami will represent (e.g., dolls, knitted clothing, fishing nets, jewelry, or perhaps something stranger...), to add a detail about what makes this village's craft unique, and to consider what it reveals about their village.
- 7) Instruct the players to create their characters by defining a positive relationship and a negative relationship with members of their groups (Optionally taking notes on an index card).

- 8) Instruct all players to make a positive relationship and a negative relationship with other players not in their groups (Optionally taking notes on an index card).

(If you have too few players to have multiple groups, instruct each player to create a second character who they may play during the night rounds and at the Harvest Festival. This second character should only have relationships created during this step attaching them to the original characters. Use an out-of-character check-in to switch between characters during the Harvest Festival as needed.)

- 9) Instruct all players go around in a circle briefly introducing their character by their name, pronouns, and connections.

Play

During the day, players are given at least one piece of origami paper and sit with their groups. Each day, they are to practice their craft (though maybe unsuccessfully), seek advice from their peers, and gossip about the up-coming Harvest Festival or local drama. End the day after 15 minutes, or whenever all groups fall silent.

At night, players have 20 minutes to play out scenes of their character outside of their typical work hours. They can include as many or as few other players as they wish. Multiple scenes should run concurrently. Before the scene begins, players must agree on a time & place & a question about a participating player that you want to discover an answer to during the scene. Scenes can last the whole night round, can be quick snapshots lasting merely seconds, or anywhere in between. (Shorter scenes leave more time for more scenes.) Any player in a scene may end it by announcing, "Scene!" If players overhear something from a scene they are not in, they may use that knowledge in-character as gossip. If you are not in a scene, consider what your character does & thinks about when they are alone. We will only play 2 night rounds.

The Harvest Festival begins after the third day round. Instruct all players to get comfortable and close their eyes. Prepare them for the Harvest Festival:

*We will now perform one final scene with everyone: the Harvest Festival.
We will give away each piece of origami we have created
as a symbol of gratitude, forgiveness, or apology.
This scene will end when the last of the gifts has been accepted or rejected.*

*Imagine the center of the village decorated for the Harvest Festival. It is beautiful.
Imagine the feast you just shared with your fellow villagers. It was delicious.*

*Picture the faces you are happy to see here.
Picture the faces you are anxious to see here.*

*And finally, imagine how things could be made different
by the gifts you are about to give & receive.*

Now, open your eyes and give away your creations.

Gratitude to Kate Hill, Clio Yun-su Davis, Joie Martin, and Peter Svensson for their insight & support and to the Golden Cobra Challenge for years of unforgettable experiences.