

# Another Year

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# Key information

- Players: 2-3, though multiple groups can play in parallel
- Time: 15-30 minutes
- Location: a local cemetery
- Playing style: realism
- Items needed: a classic board or card game; a picnic blanket, these rules

## Premise

Someone close to you died. Every year, on the anniversary of their death, you visit their grave. There, you play an old board game and update them about your life.

## Safety and respect

This game is played in a cemetery. When picking a cemetery, make sure it's one that you can safely play in. Some regions of the world may not be a good fit for this game. You may want to check in with the cemetery staff before playing.

Be respectful during your time in the cemetery. Pick a place to play that is far from other visitors. Keep your voices down. If you think that you might bother someone else present, stop playing.

## Setup

- Choose a board game that travels well and that both players know (eg. Backgammon, Checkers, Chess). Consider bringing a picnic blanket to sit on.
- Bring it to a local cemetery and go to an area far from other visitors. Find the grave of someone who has died within the past fifty years.
- Choose one player to be the Deceased and a player to be their living Visitor
- Check the Deceased's birth year. If it was even, the relationship between the two was generally good; if it was odd, the relationship was rocky.
- Check the Deceased's death year. If it was even, the Deceased died at a high point in the relationship; if it was odd then the Deceased died when the relationship was fraught.
- Decide together: what was your relationship? Example: family, romantic partners, colleagues, friends, rivals.
- The board game is one which you used to play together. Now the Visitor comes to the graveyard every year, on the anniversary of the Deceased's death, and plays it as they update the Deceased on their past year. Set up the board game near the grave.

# Playing the game

The game unfolds as the Visitor and Deceased play the board game. However, the Visitor does not hear or see the Deceased. The Deceased moves their own game pieces but the Visitor thinks that they are playing by themselves. The Visitor always makes the first move.

As you play, take turns sharing memories, reflections, or updates. These don't need to be timed to the moves of the board game.

- Visitor: share memories from the past year, things you're looking forward to in the near future, or problems that you're facing.
- Deceased: share a memory of your time with the visitor or reflect on a time in your life that might be relevant with what the visitor is sharing. Do not explicitly comment on what the visitor has said (e.g. don't say "Congratulations!")

Don't try to fill every minute with monologues. Cherish long silences as the characters search for the right thing to share.

# Ending the game

Play ends after the board game ends, although either player can choose to end earlier.

Then, the Visitor should say either:

- "I'll see you next year"
- "Farewell"

The Deceased should reply with either:

- "I'll be right here"
- "I'll be gone"

# Playing with additional players

If you have an even number of players, split into pairs and play in parallel at different graves. If you have an odd number, one threesome should find a pair of graves that seem to belong to a couple that died around the same time. Two players should play as the Deceased and one should be the Visitor. The two deceased can hear each other but shouldn't engage in dialogue; take turns sharing memories and reflections.