

The  
**Q**uiet  
PART 1

**CHARACTER GUIDE**

*The Quiet: Part 1*, is a collaborative adventure game created by interactive artist Risa Puno and longtime D&D enthusiast Avi Dobkin in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Designed for playing remotely, this participatory artwork is rooted in tabletop role-playing game mechanics where one player presents others with narrative situations to which they respond and react. This delightfully analog, call-and-response format offers a welcome reprieve during a time where everything has been digitized. The way the story develops is informed by what the players decide to investigate and explore—the narrative becomes a living, breathing entity, shaped by their personalities and value systems. This malleable framework is an ideal way to introduce a small sense of agency during a time when many things feel beyond our control.

While *The Quiet* maintains some of the fantasy elements that have come to be expected in these types of games, this collective storytelling experience is inspired by the complex emotions and social dynamics of this unprecedented moment in history. Rather than a distraction or escape, *The Quiet* is intended to help people engage with themes of safety, guardianship, access, and support. It provides players a disarmingly fun opportunity to consider content that might otherwise seem overwhelming during this time of uncertainty.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### • Why is this called “Part 1”?

*The Quiet* is a story that will be told in two parts. Each part is a complete adventure that can be experienced on its own. It tells a full story that will be part of the larger narrative when both parts are complete, like a movie and its sequel.

### • How many people can play?

This game is designed for 3-5 people. One person chooses to play the Narrator and the other players each take the role of a Character.

In Part 1: the Narrator runs separate sessions of the same adventure for each of the 2-4 Characters. Each Character plays one-on-one with the Narrator. In Part 2 (coming soon): all Characters will play together in a single session with the same Narrator.

The Narrator’s main responsibilities are presenting the situations to the Character, running the game mechanics, and narrating the results of the Character’s actions. The Character decides what actions they take in response to the story that the Narrator presents. The story changes based on the decisions they make.

### • Do I need to know how to play Dungeons & Dragons?

Definitely not! This game was designed for anyone with an internet connection who can read English or Greek. Our goal was to create a simplified version of tabletop role-playing game mechanics that can be picked up and played really easily.

### • Do we have to play in person?

No! In fact, this was specifically designed to be played by people who are not in the same location. It can be nice to be able to see the people you are playing with over video chat; however, this game can also just be played over the phone as long as the Narrator has a way to send files and images to the Characters during the game. The Narrator has information that the Character shouldn’t see, so if you live in the same home, play using different devices.

### • Can I play by myself?

Unfortunately, no. This time is already marked by so much isolation that we wanted to create a way for people to be able to gather virtually.

### • How long does it take to play?

Learning how to play should take about 45 minutes for the Narrator and 15 minutes for each Character. (The Narrator only needs to learn how to play once, even when running the adventure in different sessions for multiple Characters.)

Each adventure session in Part I should take about 45 minutes to play. The Narrator plays one-on-one with each Character. So if you have 1 Narrator and 3 Characters, then that Narrator will play three separate 45 min sessions with each Character.

### • What if I don’t have a 20-sided die?

No problem! This game instructs players to roll a 20-sided number die (aka “d20”) to determine how successful your actions are. However, if you don’t have an actual d20 at home, you can just type “roll d20” into Google, or ask Siri or Alexa to “roll a d20.” (*More info below*)

### • My friends and I are expert D&D players, do we have to use your rules?

Not if you don’t want to. We designed this game for anyone to be able to pick up and play; however, if you would rather play with mechanics, then your DM can just use this as a rough guide to convert this adventure for Tier 1 characters.

### • When and where can I find Part 2?

Soon, and... we’re not sure yet. :) Follow @risapuno and @asdobkin on Instagram/Twitter to find out when Part 2 becomes available.

## FOREWORD: Letter from the Creators

We didn't quite know what we were getting into when we started talking about writing *The Quiet*. It originally was going to be a *Dungeons & Dragons* adventure inspired by social distancing and the global coronavirus pandemic. One that would allow people to unpack some of the complicated feelings they are having and increase their sense of agency in an engaging way. Rather than being anxious due to uncertainty, players would be able to feel excited about discovering the unknown. A seemingly straightforward task, even if it wasn't necessarily an easy one. We thought that we would first come up with a basic narrative framework, and then everything else would fall into place. It turned out to be nowhere near that simple.

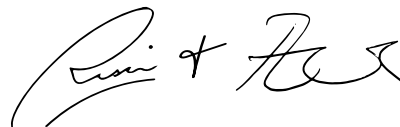
From almost the moment we began, things started to shift under our feet. One of the difficulties about writing about quarantine from inside of it was how our understanding of it kept changing. Each day, as the news brought new insights, worries, and hopes, the game grew with them. The process of writing *The Quiet* became a way for us to compare our different experiences and share hard-to-explain feelings regarding our own roles within the larger societal picture.

We found having the space to examine hard choices and sacrifices within the safety of a game so beneficial that we wanted to make it accessible to as many people as possible. But learning how to play a verbal adventure game like this can be extremely time-consuming. So instead of building a game on mechanics that can take weeks to learn, we wanted to capture the spirit of

this type of game in a format that could be picked up relatively quickly. We realized that if we wanted *The Quiet* to get into all the hands we hoped, then we'd need to come up with an entirely new gaming framework.

We had a lot of discussions about what makes this sort of game special. We even grappled with whether to call it a "role playing game." We didn't want to give people who are new to the genre the impression that our game was about acting or escapism. We started calling it a "collective storytelling experience" because we wanted a term that focuses on offering people the power to change and mold the narrative together. It is exhilarating to see how unique a story can become when multiple people bring it to life through collaboration. The idea of giving that feeling to people who might not have it otherwise, felt like something worth striving for.

It was a big push and we struggled, but we were actually able to develop our streamlined gameplay system and finish designing Part 1. While there are definitely things that we are hoping to tweak when we publish both parts in the future, we are really proud of what we were able to accomplish in this mad sprint. We hope that this game is as engaging, challenging, and helpful for you as it has been for us.



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# GETTING STARTED: Gather Materials + Create Your Character

## MATERIALS FOR GAME

### 1) PAPER + PENCIL/PEN

*(or some digital alternative)*

- You should keep track of what you've found or earned during the adventure so that you know what you have at your disposal when trying to solve a problem.
- Some people find it helpful to take notes or sketches during the game to better understand the spaces that the Narrator is describing.

### 2) 20-SIDED DIE (AKA "D20")

Sometimes during your turn, you may need to roll a d20 to determine how successful your actions are.

*If you don't have a d20, no problem!*

There are many alternatives:

#### Alternative on a computer:

- You can just type "roll d20" into Google

#### Alternative on a smartphone:

- You can just type "dice roller" into Google
- Tap the big blue cube to make it disappear
- Tap the small orange hexagon that says "20" to make the d20 appear
- Anytime you want to roll, just press the blue "Roll" button

#### Alternative with a digital voice assistant:

- ask Siri or Alexa to "roll a D 20"

#### Non-digital alternative:

- Cut 20 pieces of paper
- Write the numbers 1-20
- Put them in a container
- Draw a number when you are asked to roll

## ABOUT CHARACTERS

- Each player creates a Character.
- Characters are who the story is centered around.
- In the game, you make decisions about what your Character tries to do.
- While this type of game is often called a "role-playing game," you are not expected to do voices or wear costumes.
  - > It just means that you see things through the eyes of your Character
  - > The actions that the Character takes are not limited by your knowledge or ability.

## RESILIENCE

- **Each Character starts out with 10 points of Resilience.**
- If you get hurt during the adventure, you lose Resilience. If you lose all Resilience, you die.

## TRADES

- When players create their Characters, they choose a Trade.
- Each Trade includes a different specialty skill and corresponding possessions. *(see Character Sheets for more info)*
- **You choose one of three Trades for your Character:**
  - **Carpenter** = specializes in **Physical** skills, like: strength, speed, flexibility, dexterity, and/or keen senses
  - **Scholar** = specializes in **Mental** skills, like the ability to: process new information, recall facts, understand how to build something or use a tool, and/or remember what you've seen, read, or heard
  - **Merchant** = specializes in **Social** skills, like: charm, befriend, soothe/comfort, entertain, distract, misdirect, cajole, convince/persuade, threaten, condescend, and/or bargain

## NAME

- Naming your Character is optional, but it helps some players get into the spirit of the game!

## CARPENTER

### RESILIENCE

- Each Character starts out with 10 points of Resilience.
- If you get hurt during the adventure, you lose Resilience.

### SPECIALTY SKILLS

**Bonus: +2** → to any rolls for *Physical* success

- strength
- speed
- flexibility
- dexterity
- keen senses

### STANDARD EQUIPMENT

*(same for all trades)*

- Explorer's clothes (that you are wearing)
- Backpack
- Bedroll
- Torch (w/ flint and steel)
- Canteen full of water (½ gallon)
- Compass
- 50 ft of rope
- Letter from the Keepers ([on page 11](#))

### SPECIALTY POSSESSIONS

- Hammer
- Nails
- Chisel
- Pouch of dried apricots

### GENERAL TIPS

- Remember to keep a record of anything you find or earn during the adventure. That way, you will know what you have at your disposal when trying to solve a problem.
- All the information you need to succeed is in the game—you don't need to look up any facts online.
- You can use any of your equipment or any objects in your surroundings to get the job done. Feel free to get creative!

### HELP!

- **What if I can't think of what to do?**
  - > Check your inventory to see if you can use what you brought/found to help you.
  - > Perhaps try investigating your surroundings. You might not have discovered important details or items that you can use to complete your task.
- **What do I do if my action fails?**
  - > Try solving the problem using a different approach. There is often more than one way to solve a problem.
- **If I don't understand something?**
  - > Don't be afraid to ask your Narrator if you need more clarification or want them to repeat the description. They are there to be your guide.

## SCHOLAR

### RESILIENCE

- Each Character starts out with 10 points of Resilience.
- If you get hurt during the adventure, you lose Resilience.

### SPECIALTY SKILLS

**Bonus: +2** → to any rolls for *Mental* success

- processing new information
- recalling facts or trivia
- understanding how to build something or use a tool
- remembering what you've seen, read, or heard

### STANDARD EQUIPMENT

*(same for all trades)*

- Explorer's clothes (that you are wearing)
- Backpack
- Bedroll
- Torch (w/ flint and steel)
- Canteen full of water (½ gallon)
- Compass
- 50 ft of rope
- Letter from the Keepers ([on page 11](#))

### SPECIALTY POSSESSIONS

- Notebook and pencil
- Pen knife
- Magnifying glass
- Small bag of walnuts

### GENERAL TIPS

- Remember to keep a record of anything you find or earn during the adventure. That way, you will know what you have at your disposal when trying to solve a problem.
- All the information you need to succeed is in the game—you don't need to look up any facts online.
- You can use any of your equipment or any objects in your surroundings to get the job done. Feel free to get creative!

### HELP!

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  - > Perhaps try investigating your surroundings. You might not have discovered important details or items that you can use to complete your task.
- **What do I do if my action fails?**
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- **If I don't understand something?**
  - > Don't be afraid to ask your Narrator if you need more clarification or want them to repeat the description. They are there to be your guide.

## MERCHANT

### RESILIENCE

- Each Character starts out with 10 points of Resilience.
- If you get hurt during the adventure, you lose Resilience.

### SPECIALTY SKILLS

**Bonus: +2** → to any rolls for *Social* success

- charm, befriend, entertain
- soothe/comfort
- distract, misdirect
- convince/persuade, cajole, bargain
- threaten, condescend

### STANDARD EQUIPMENT

(same for all trades)

- Explorer's clothes (that you are wearing)
- Backpack
- Bedroll
- Torch (w/ flint and steel)
- Canteen full of water (½ gallon)
- Compass
- 50 ft of rope
- Letter from the Keepers (on page 11)

### SPECIALTY POSSESSIONS

- Gold coins
- Dagger
- Corkscrew
- Box of chocolate bonbons

### GENERAL TIPS

- Remember to keep a record of anything you find or earn during the adventure. That way, you will know what you have at your disposal when trying to solve a problem.
- All the information you need to succeed is in the game—you don't need to look up any facts online.
- You can use any of your equipment or any objects in your surroundings to get the job done. Feel free to get creative!

### HELP!

- **What if I can't think of what to do?**
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## HOW TO PLAY: Step-By-Step (1 of 2)

### BASICS

- **How the story unfolds is a collaboration between you and the Narrator.**
- There is no game board or tokens. The majority of game play is done verbally. (Occasionally, the Narrator may text or email files with extra information to you during the game, depending on where you go and what you do.)
- For Part 1, each player schedules a separate time to play one-on-one with the Narrator.
- Your session starts by the Narrator presenting the beginning of the story to create context and letting you know what your Character is trying to accomplish during this adventure.

### TL;DR — QUICK SUMMARY

- 1) Narrator reads a description of a situation or space.**
- 2) You tell the Narrator what action your Character will take in response.**
- 3) To determine whether or not your Character's action is successful, the Narrator may ask you to "roll for Physical/Mental/Social success."**
  - Add 2 extra points to the number you roll if the action falls within your specialty skill set (depending on which Trade you chose for your Character).
- 4) Narrator describes the outcome and effect of your action.**
- 5) You decide how your Character reacts and/or what they try next.**

## PLAYING THE GAME

- 1) When your Character enters a new space or encounters new information or creatures, the Narrator reads (or makes up) a description.**
- 2) Based on their description, you tell the Narrator what action your Character will take in response to the situation or space.**
  - ***You get to decide how your Character reacts to the situation***—let your instincts and imagination be your guide. As in life, there is usually more than one way to solve a problem.
  - ***You can use any of your equipment or any objects in your surroundings to get the job done. Feel free to get creative!***
  - ***Your Character is not limited by your personal knowledge, experience, or abilities.*** You don't need to know exactly how to execute your plan or how possible it is. That's what the d20 is for. (More about that later.)
  - That being said, your Character in this adventure does not have innate magical abilities. So you can't just cast spells to fly or anything. (But you may encounter items or creatures in the adventure with magical properties—you will just need to figure out what those properties are. Some things are intended as obstacles to overcome, while others are tools that you can use to help you along the way.)
  - ***It is important to clearly describe the action your Character is taking, so that the Narrator better understands how to articulate its effects.***
  - Everything you need is in the game—you don't need to look up any facts online.
  - ***Don't be afraid to ask your Narrator if you need more clarification or want them to repeat the description.*** They are there to be your guide.
  - There is no time limit for choosing your Character's action, however, try not to lose the momentum of the game.



## HOW TO PLAY: Step-By-Step (2 of 2)

### 3) To determine whether or not your Character's action is successful, the Narrator may ask you to "roll for Physical/Mental/Social success."

- You will then roll a 20-sided number die (aka "d20") to determine how successful your actions are. (If you don't have a d20, see Gather What You Need section for more info.)
- ***If your Character specializes in that particular skill category (Physical, Mental, or Social), then you can add an extra 2 points to the number that you roll.***
  - See Getting Started for summary of different Trade skill sets
- The Narrator acts as a referee and makes the final decision whether the action requires you to roll for success and whether it is Physical, Mental, or Social.
  - You are usually only asked to roll for success if the task involves some level of difficulty or uncertainty. For example, you wouldn't have to roll for success if your Character needed to tie their own shoelaces. But you would roll for Physical success if your Character needed to tie their own shoelaces while wearing mittens.

### 4) Narrator describes the outcome and effect of your action.

- When you roll, you don't know what number was needed for success. (This is up to the Narrator, with some guidelines from the game creators.)
- ***This is where you find out whether or not your Character succeeded, and whether or not your action has the effect that you intended.***

### 5) You decide how your Character reacts and/or what they try next.

- Based on what happened, you get to choose how to respond. This back-and-forth is the heart of the game. It's all about collaborative storytelling!

### GENERAL TIPS

- Remember to keep a record of anything you find or earn during the adventure. That way, you will know what you have at your disposal when trying to solve a problem.
- All the information you need to succeed is in the game—you don't need to look up any facts online.
- You can use any of your equipment or any objects in your surroundings to get the job done. Feel free to get creative!

### HELP!

- ***What if I can't think of what to do?***
  - > Check your inventory to see if you can use what you brought/found to help you.
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# STORY INTRODUCTION: The Legend of The Keepers

*(read out loud by Narrator at the beginning of game)*

“ The Quiet is always with us. It lingers in the background of our lives, ever on the lookout for an opportunity to expand. Like some insidious growth, its roots are deep within us, feeding on our fears and bolstering our faults, always forcing us apart when we need to come together. And when all are suffering under a global weight, when it can hurt us the most, The Quiet feasts. Basking in our suffering, and gorging on our pain.

The Quiet last emerged a century ago, while a mysterious plague swept across the land, killing many in its wake. We cloistered ourselves away, fearing each other as much as we feared affliction. We became hollow, and the bonds of community weakened and broke. In the spaces left behind, grew The Quiet. A dense fog of uncertainty swirled through empty streets. Where the cacophony of life had once rung out, only panicked murmurs remained. Petrified by the outbreak, the world succumbed to The Quiet.

We watched as all around us, people fell ill. Those skilled few that could fight were run ragged, as they did battle without sword or shield, valiantly defending all who came in contact with the disease. Meanwhile, the rest of us sat with folded hands, waiting for news of victory or despair.

Hopeless and helpless, we lost all sense of time. Meanwhile, The Quiet flourished. Some thought what we needed were answers, but in the absence of truth, we filled the air with misinformation, distraction, and lies. Others thought what we needed was stillness, but in the absence of peace, we turned to denial, indifference, and fear. But a few realized that neither noise, nor silence, would defeat The Quiet. We needed a place to listen, and a way to support.

And so rose the Keepers. Ordinary people who banded together out of necessity, out of desperation, out of duty. Together, they created The Forum. A way to connect and communicate, it became a space *for* collaboration, born *from* collaboration. And as we learned how to respect each other, The Quiet's grip weakened. As we committed ourselves to compassion, The Quiet receded. And as we listened to each other, we began to fill in the cracks The Quiet came through.

And so we declared victory.

Yet, while the realm celebrated, the wise Keepers knew that The Quiet had not been vanquished. They knew that it continued to live deep in our hearts, and would rise again the next time we faced an unperceivable threat. So, in order to preserve access to The Forum, they created powerful Devices. Every village was given a golden box containing one precious Device, a safeguard for when The Quiet returned.

And now, that time is upon us. One hundred years later, we are again fractured and disconnected. But today, The Keepers live only in legend, and the locations of their powerful Devices have been long since forgotten.

Or so we thought.

A few days ago, you were woken up by a knock and a letter slipped under your door bearing an unfamiliar crest. A dark square set inside a circle.”

## INVENTORY: Letter from The Keepers

To a Kindred Spirit,

I am writing to you on behalf of The Keepers. We are calling on you to join us in vanquishing The Quiet.

One hundred years ago, we entrusted each village with a golden box containing a powerful Device. Your village, like several others, chose to hide its box in its most protected place—the sacred garden where your healers cultivate the many medicinal plants and herbs that the village relies upon. A relic of the past, the box sits on a stone pedestal that has been overlooked and unremembered. But we trust that it has remained safe there for the past century.

Now that The Quiet has returned, we are asking one person from every village to find their Device and join us. We have seen how much you care for your mother. How, after she came home sick from treating those in need, you have diligently administered the medicinal herbs she needs to live. We admire your devotion to her, as well as the respect for the healing power of the plants that she has passed on to you. It is that reverence you hold for all life that we find most worthy.

If you decide to join us, you must go to the cavern that houses the medicinal garden and recover the Device. When you have it in hand, you will be given further instructions for how to connect.

We do not take this request lightly. As you are aware, the tunnels that lead to the garden are fraught with perils designed as protections from those who would do damage to the life-giving plants within. And of course, it will be difficult to leave your mother in someone else's care. However, when society is in danger, able individuals must be willing to take on additional responsibility.

We look forward to fighting alongside you, should you accept this duty. Your mother, your village, and the world are counting on you.

Yours In SUPPORT,  
One of Many