



# **TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE**

**THE GAME MASTER'S GUIDE**





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# INTRODUCTION



Time is of the Essence is a game designed to help players reflect on their time management skills, putting them in a position where they will need to organize and prioritize 'tasks', within a very limited time frame.



During the game, players will be the brightest minds of the world in the area of health science, invited to socialize and talk about the future by a multimillionaire who is determined to see his vision come to life. Each player will have their personal goals and agenda, but during the game they will discover a bomb. They will need to deal with the crisis at hand, while trying to achieve their personal and group objectives.



# OVERVIEW

## Brief Description

Thirty of the world's brightest minds have been invited to a secluded mansion, owned by reclusive multimillionaire and visionary, Robert Green. Each of you is an expert in your respective field—technology, medicine, psychology, engineering, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and more. The invitation was mysterious, offering little detail beyond a promise that this gathering could lead to a project that would change the world forever.

### Players

11 – 30

### Facilitators

2

### Time

3 hours approximately

### Components



Envelopes (normal and small)  
Printables  
Masking tape or Labels  
Pens  
One cellphone  
Optional: Snacks and Drinks, plastic cups



# PREPARATION STEPS

1

Before the briefing starts, hide a cell phone with 135 + preparation time minutes countdown. Make sure there is sound at the end of the countdown, because it will signify the end of the game. Make sure that the countdown is visible when the screen is locked, and put the phone in aeroplane mode, disconnected from the internet, to minimise out of game distractions. Set the lock screen password to 3195.

2

Separate an in game from an out of game area, limiting the area where the people can play.

3

If it is available to you, prepare a 'bar' area, with juice and snacks.

4

Before the activity starts, tell your players to dress as fancy as possible, as if they were going to a party.

5

If it is possible, have another phone connected to a loud speaker with a countdown sound that will exist in the background, that will start in Phase b of the Game play. If the players manage to unarm the bomb, stop the countdown sound.



# BRIEFING-35'

During the briefing, you will introduce the players to the premise of the game, to the rules and the mechanics of the game, and eventually, character distribution, character personalization and enrolling.





# SAFETY - 5'

## Emotional Safety

No matter the game, emotional safety should always be a priority. While this game is not designed for heavy emotional play and it is not triggering it self, if for any reason a player feels overwhelmed, triggered or unsafe they are allowed to remove themselves from the game by using the out of game signal and taking as much time as they need.

## Physical Safety

There are no combat mechanics in this game, there is no reason for physical contact in this game (such as searching, restraining etc). Before any kind of physical contact is initiated with any player, make sure they are comfortable and you have consent.

**Out of game signal:** Closed fist above the head means that this player is out of game. For all intents and purposes, assume that this player does not exist.



## Facilitators

Make sure that every player knows who the facilitators are and explain your role. Both facilitators are in-game characters : Robert Green is the multimillionaire host and Lara Green is the host's sister. For any out of game inquiries, players can approach Lara, follow her in the out of game area and ask her whatever they need. Make sure that players understand the following: if any of the facilitators announce something, for example that the doors are locked, they need to consider this as a rule that cannot be overridden until said otherwise. Even if the doors are in reality unlocked, they should continue playing as if they were locked, until instructed otherwise.



# RULES & MECHANICS - 5'

## Cards

Each player will have a smaller envelope distributed to them, to be opened when instructed in the game, that may contain some cards. They are one use and players need follow the instructions to the T. Under no circumstances physical force will be needed. Types of cards: action cards - they will describe an action that needs to be taken. Role Cards: they will indicate the role and a group objective.

## Character Sheets/Objectives/Roles

Character sheets and objectives are secret, and are not meant to be shared openly, with the exception of the case that a card instructs it. That being said, players are allowed to expand on the story given to you, hint on their secrets should they want to. Roles are also meant to be kept secret, except if a card request that it is revealed.

## Objectives

Each objective will give some amount of points in the end of the game. For an objective to be valid, something will need to be filled in the \_\_\_\_\_ space.

# CHARACTER DISTRIBUTION - 10'

Randomly distribute one envelope to each player, the contents of which they need to keep secret in, and out of the game. The envelope contains:

1. Robert Green's invitation to the event.
2. A passport that is their character sheet. The passport contains a very basic backstory and a secret. It also contains spaces that will need to be filled later on the game.
3. A smaller envelope that contains their role, clues if any, and special cards. This envelope will be opened in Phase b, players are not allowed to open it in this moment.

Allow players to take a few minutes to read their character card and come to you with any questions they might have.



# ENROLLMENT - 15'

Enrolling is the process of getting into your role, and it helps immersion and role playing. Ask your players to sit in a circle. After each of them reads the short intro in their character sheet, tell them to imagine they are their character and answer in their head the following questions and write the answer in the relevant part of their character sheet:

01

What are 3 key personality traits your character has? (3 minutes)

02

What motivated you to get involved in your field? (3 minutes)

03

What is your favourite and least favourite thing in your job? (3 minutes)

04

What is the name and surname of your character? (3 minutes)

05

After they decide their character's name, give them a piece of masking tape or the label, where they should clearly write their character's name, as well as their profession. (3 minutes)





# GAME PLAY

The aim of Phase A of the game, is to allow people to interact with each other, getting more comfortable with their roles and their characters, for a smother gameplay.

# PHASE A

# 10'-15'

# DETAILS

During Phase A, Robert Green invites all the people to gather around him so they can raise a cup to the potential of this group of people. He reveals that the reason that he has invited each and everyone is because he needs their contribution and brilliant minds in the implementation of his dream project: the creation of C.A.R.E., a smart microchip that will be implanted in the brain of the client, and will constantly scan the body for significant changes that could be signs of disease, before even symptoms appear. Anything out of the ordinary, will be sent as data to the primary physician of the person, resulting in preventive care. C.A.R.E. will act as a personalised diagnostic system, aiming to prevent sickness and prolong life. Robert introduces his sister, Lana, and encourages everyone to mingle and get to know each other before they start official conversations and brainstorming in the following days.

# ADVICE

Allow people to interact with each other, possibly working towards their personal objectives. Each character has 2 types of objectives: one professional objective, that requires them to make an official professional agreement or connection with someone (must be sealed with a signature for valid points), and one objective connected to a rumour, where essentially they would need to figure out the secret or as many details possible connected to a rumour of a specific character. They need to write down a sentence that summarises the info, to be considered a successful objective.





# GAME PLAY

During Phase B of the game, the actual challenge starts. Players will have to manage to survive while achieving their personal goals. Players will need to balance their tasks within the given time.

# PHASE B

# 85'-90'





# DETAILS

In the beginning of Phase B, Robert Green requests everyone's attention.

He announces that something terrible has happened.

His security team notified him that his system has been overridden and the doors that lead outside have been locked.

Additionally, they have found a weird note that indicates that outside of the door there is a bomb that will go off in 90 minutes, unless we are competent enough to disarm it.

The note says that in their envelopes there are secret hints that they can look at, but they are not allowed to openly share them.

Everyone is under surveillance, so they need to be careful.

Each indiscretion will lead to time being cut from the count down.

Robert seems scared, shocked and unsure about what is going on.

# TASKS

1) Unlock the door: Some of the players have clues to find the code to the door, but they don't know each other.

2) Find the bomb: The players need to find where the bomb/cellphone is hidden.

3) Defuse the bomb: Some players have the clues for the code, but they do not know each other.

4) Reveal the accomplices

5) Fulfill their personal objectives.

6) Fulfill their group objectives.



# DEBRIEFING-45'

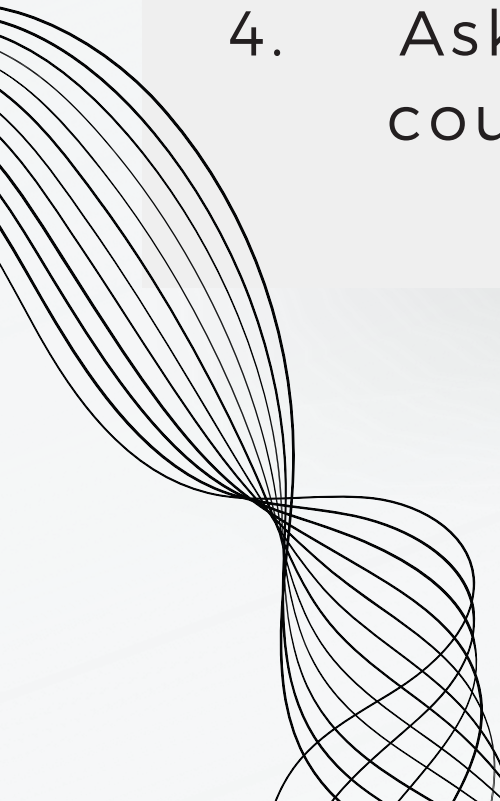
During debriefing players will have the opportunity to connect their in game experience with the real world, kickstarting a process of self reflection and learning.





## DEROLLING – 2 ‘

While this is not a game designed for deep immersive interactions, derolling is always a good practice after a LARP. After 100 mins pass or the bomb explodes, signifying the end of the game, ask your players to sit in a circle:

1. All players must remove their sticker, and throw it in the middle of the circle.
  2. All players must put their passport in their envelop and throw it also in the middle of the circle.
  3. Tell them to take a deep breath and everybody says their real name simultaneously on the count of 3.
  4. Ask the players if they managed to fulfil their objectives - personal and group- and to count their points: Professional Objective - 3 points, Secret Objective - 4 points, Group Objective -6 points
- 



## DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS – 40'

Ask the players to count from 1 to 3, creating groups of 3 and have them answer the following questions within their groups. Give 5 - 6 minutes to each question so every person can express themselves.

1. When you realised there was a timer, how did you feel? How did your feelings affect your decisions?
  2. Do you think that the tasks given were manageable in this time frame? What strategy would you use when you feel that you don't have enough time to fulfil your tasks?
  3. How did you prioritise your actions under the time constraint? How did you prioritise between your personal goals and the group goal?
  4. What do you think you could have done better to reach your goal faster and more efficiently?
  5. Were there moments when you felt time pressure significantly affected your performance? How did you cope with this pressure?
  6. Did you encounter any difficulties in coordinating with others to manage time and tasks effectively? How did you address these difficulties?
  7. Could any of the time management skills you practised today be applied to future real life situations? If yes, where and how? If not, why?
- After the players have finished debriefing in their little groups, ask them all to gather in a circle for the last time, and ask them to answer the following question:
8. In one word, what was the most critical factor in managing your time effectively during the game?



# ADDITIONAL INFO

Tips, tricks and extra details for the facilitators.  
This information is to help you run the game  
smoother, do not share them with your players as  
they reveal the plot of the game.

# FACILITATOR CHARACTERS

The facilitators are meant to be in game characters. Their role is to move the game from the inside, motivate and help players, initiate role playing scenes, all without breaking the immersion. Facilitators will need to mingle and interact, but not steal the spotlight. They also need to be aware of possible out of game needs, and resolve them in the out of game area.

## ROBERT GREEN

The host and the person behind the idea. Multimillionaire, visionary, with the genuine intention to use his wealth to make the world a better place. Your job is to keep people engaged and entertained, keep the game going and help people roleplay if needed. Your character is friendly and open to questions, ideas and conversation.

## LARA GREEN

The host's younger sister. You are a bit of a snob, but helpful and supportive of your brother. You do not necessarily approve how he wants to spend his fortune, but you recognise his good intentions. You believe that gathering a group of random people from all over the world to work on a high stakes project like this is a recipe for disaster. You just want to see how all of these people will act under pressure and be a better judge of their characters, before they mess up your brother's dreams.



# PLAYERS

There are 3 different roles for the players. Their roles will be revealed in Phase B of the gameplay, alongside with any cards or objectives. Each different role will also have a Group Objective. The catch is that players do not know each other's roles nor they are allowed to reveal them - unless instructed otherwise by a card.

## Innocent

Innocents are the majority of the players, they are completely uninvolved with the bomb. They have clues about how to unlock the door, but not all clues are real. Their aim is to defuse the bomb and survive.

## Investigator

Investigators are characters that are nosy and observant. While they do not carry any clues themselves, they have special cards that they can use to move the game. Their aim is to catch all the accomplices.

## Accomplice

Accomplices are players that were blackmailed into the bomb plot by someone. Each of them has a piece of information that will defuse the bomb. Their aim is to defuse the bomb but they do not want to be caught and incriminated.



# SPECIAL CARDS

There are 4 different special cards. All cards are one use only, meaning that after use the card should be destroyed.

## Reveal

This is a one use card.  
When you show it to someone, they are obligated to truthfully tell you:

a) their secret

or

b) show you their role and clues - if any.

Then tear the card in half.

Clues revealed this way are posted publicly for everyone to see. The role must remain secret.

## Citizen's Arrest

Whenever you want to use this card, find 2 more players to cosign the arrest of the person.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

arrest

\_\_\_\_\_

Whenever a person is arrested, all their information, role, and clues are public.

## Distraction

This is a one use card, use it to defend either yourself or someone else against the 'Reveal' card.

When this card is used, you are no longer obliged to reveal your secret or your passport number.

Both cards get destroyed immediately after.

## Trade

This is a one use card, use it to see someone's role, but you are obligated to show your role too.

Then, destroy this card. The roles revealed this way remain secret and cannot be shared with other players.



# UNLOCKING THE DOOR-HINTS

The key to exit: **U**nderstanding the nature of human health is a process that will  
The key to exit: **n**ever end, unless we manage to achieve superhuman longevity.  
The key to exit: **L**uckily we have open access to numerous achievements, researches and experiments that have happened  
The key to exit: **o**ver the years, a fact that allows us to progress faster, basing our future work over the  
The key to exit: **c**ollaboration and between scientists of every possible heald related field.  
The key to exit: **K**eeping track of all those innovations and fresh ideas can be very hard.  
The key to exit: **W**ith your contributions, transparency, and collaboration  
The key to exit: **I** am positive that we will be able to collectively take the next step for  
The key to exit: **t**he sake of humanity. I understand that initially there will be some  
The key to exit: **h**esitation, but I believe that eventually we will build the trust needed.  
The key to exit: **T**herefore, I am proud to present to you the Health Database, an open storage space of  
The key to exit: **i**nformation that is constantly updated with all the fresh research and ideas.  
The key to exit: **M**aking this was a child of hard labour, but also of passion about information accessibility. I am sure that  
The key to exit: **e**ach and every one of us will find this database useful and as an opportunity to truly connect with fellow scientists.





# UNLOCKING THE DOOR-SOLUTION

UNLOCK WITH TIME

The answer to unlock the door is the word **TIME**

Fake Hints:

The key to exit: Feel free to use my newest endeavour openly, but also do not be afraid

The key to exit: to contribute to it, the richer we make it, the better of a tool it will be.

Notes: The key to open the door is the word TIME. All innocents will have a piece of the clue, they need to manage to find each other and figure out the riddle.



# DEFUSING THE BOMB

Each accomplice has one letter as a hint:

Real Hints: **C A R E**

Fake Hints: **O W**

The accomplices need to figure out the correct word, and transform it to a number

Solution: **CARE** > (C=3,A=1,R=18=9,E=5)

The word is also hinted in Robert Green's invitation letter, as the chip he wants to make is named C.A.R.E.



# HOW TO SCALE DOWN

Prepare 30 envelopes with a random passport, the invitation, one random professional objective and one random secret objective. Prepare 30 small envelopes with one role and the accompanying cards:

1. Innocents: 4 of them get a reveal card, 4 of them get a Trade card and 4 of them get a Citizen's arrest card, all of them get a hint card for unlocking the door.
2. Investigators: All of them get 2 reveal cards, 1 trade card and 1 citizen's arrest card
3. Accomplices: All of them get 1 distraction card, and 1 trade card, and 1 hint card the bomb

If you have less than 30 players, just distribute the extra hints between the correspondent roles.

<b>30 players</b>	16 innocents, 8 investigators, 6 accomplices
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<b>29 players</b>	15 innocents, 8 investigators, 6 accomplices
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<b>28 players</b>	14 innocents, 8 investigators, 6 accomplices
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<b>27 players</b>	14 innocents, 7 investigators, 6 accomplices
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<b>26 players</b>	13 innocents, 7 investigators, 6 accomplices
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<b>25 players</b>	13 innocents, 7 investigators, 5 accomplices
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<b>24 players</b>	12 innocents, 7 investigators, 5 accomplices
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<b>23 players</b>	12 innocents, 6 investigators, 5 accomplices
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<b>22 players</b>	11 innocents, 8 investigators, 6 accomplices
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<b>21 players</b>	10 innocents, 6 investigators, 5 accomplices
-------------------	--

<b>20 players</b>	10 innocents, 6 investigators, 4 accomplices
-------------------	--

<b>19 players</b>	10 innocents, 5 investigators, 4 accomplices
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<b>18 players</b>	9 innocents, 5 investigators, 4 accomplices
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<b>17 players</b>	9 innocents, 4 investigators, 4 accomplices
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<b>16 players</b>	8 innocents, 4 investigators, 4 accomplices
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<b>15 players</b>	8 innocents, 4 investigators, 3 accomplices
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<b>14 players</b>	7 innocents, 4 investigators, 3 accomplices
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<b>13 players</b>	6 innocents, 4 investigators, 3 accomplices
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<b>12 players</b>	5 innocents, 4 investigators, 3 accomplices
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<b>11 players</b>	5 innocents, 3 investigators, 3 accomplices
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# LINKS

Game Master's Guide:

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGVIFuLLs0/TrKPxbAhG\\_59ajrHP941mQ/edit?](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGVIFuLLs0/TrKPxbAhG_59ajrHP941mQ/edit?utm_content=DAGVIFuLLs0&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

[utm\\_content=DAGVIFuLLs0&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGVIFuLLs0/TrKPxbAhG_59ajrHP941mQ/edit?utm_content=DAGVIFuLLs0&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

Printables:

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGO9WRE1CM/OrVJXagQsr73b\\_g8Mb15zg/edit](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGO9WRE1CM/OrVJXagQsr73b_g8Mb15zg/edit)